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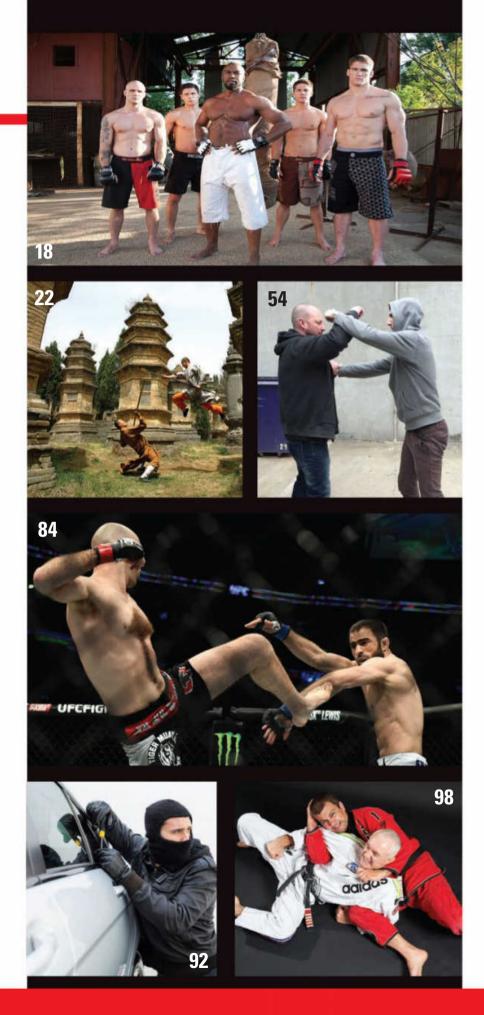
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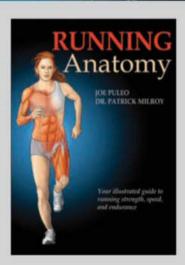
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# **EDITORIAL** WITH SILVIO MORELLI



# The Little Things...

Whether you're in the dojo and paired with a junior training partner, out walking the street or at work 'doing your thing', it pays to remember how giving that little bit extra to those who cross your path can have positive flow-on effects.

he theme for this month's column stems from an unexpected email I received a little while ago. Here is a slightly shortened version of what it said:

Hi Silvio,

I'm writing this to you as a thank-you and to let you know the ripple effect one act of kindness has had on me. As a young man with no real sense of direction in fitness and life, I found myself reading a fitness magazine. At the back of the magazine there were a series of instructional videos and I decided to buy one, so I headed down to the address in the magazine. Upon arrival, I asked the receptionist if I could purchase the video and she went off to see if she could help me. After around 30 minutes, a man walked in and asked if I had been looked after. I said yes, and told him that the receptionist was still out searching for a fitness video for me.

As we briefly discussed my interest in weights and how it may help me with my football, the man listened patiently. When the receptionist then returned empty-handed, the man set off to look for the video himself. He soon returned with a box full of items including the entire video series and a stack of magazines. He asked me if this was what I was after and told me it was part of his own collection. I told him that it was and that I appreciated his time finding all the videos, but I only had enough money for one of them. He then said to the receptionist that payment for one of these videos was fine and the rest of the series and accompanying magazines would be given to me free of charge — however, I would need to give the receptionist my name and address. With that the man walked off upstairs.

After getting home to my parents' house that day, I excitedly went through my box of goodies and came across a magazine... and on the front cover was the man who had helped me (I think you know who that was). I felt overwhelmed that someone who in my eyes was famous had spent the time to help some kid he didn't even know. About four weeks later, more fitness magazines arrived in the mail and I later discovered you had

actually put me on a monthly subscription at no cost.

For the years that followed, I used the principles learned from these videos and magazines, which helped me with my football, confidence and even my career. I'm now the operations manager for a mediumsized business and in my free time I enjoy training others at no cost. Seeing people's development gives me great satisfaction, which is maybe why you did for me what you did. I'm no 'success story' and you would never of heard of me, but upon reflection, that day changed a few things for me. I'm now 40 years old with a five-year-old daughter and in her eyes I'm her champion; I see the excitement and enthusiasm when daddv's training someone or even just working out on my own. She loves to join in and it dawned on me that I can pass a little bit of knowledge to her.

So I just wanted to say thanks after 20 years, as this small act of kindness has made a difference. I think in life it's important to sometimes pause for a minute, reflect and say thank you. And I still have those videos—thank you for the time and consideration!

Brad Heuvel, via e-mail.

I was so touched by the message — blown away, even — that I organised to meet up with the writer at the Arnold Classic. (It turned out he was going, too.) He had indeed built a very impressive physique, but more than that he was a physical reminder to me of the hugely positive effect we can have on others even through seemingly small acts. And as martial artists and instructors, our capacity to change the lives of those who train with us is even greater still. It's a responsibility we share, but it's also a privilege. Enjoy it!





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### **EDITORIAL**

**MANAGING EDITOR** Ben Stone ben@blitzmag.com.au

### EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Zach Broadhurst, Molly Morelli, Steven Talevski

### CONTRIBILITORS

Matt Beecroft, Jarrod Boyle, Paul Cale, Mike Clarke, David Dangerfield, Graham Kuerschner, Jarrah Loh, Clint Morris, Phil O'Brien, Boon Mark Souphanh, John B Will

### ART

ART DIRECTOR Javie D'Souza

**GRAPHIC DESIGNERS** Adibowo Rusli, Lysha Moniz, Diep Nguyen, Adam Summers, James Steer, Zeenia Bhikha, Jonathan Rudolph

### **DIGITAL & ONLINE**

HEAD OF DIGITAL STRATEGY Alison Adey
SENIOR WEB DEVELOPER David Ding
APP MANAGER/MARKETING Karl Nemsow
WEB DESIGNER Amanda Oliver
VIDEO EDITOR JUSTIN Oleyar
ONLINE CONTENT PRODUCER Zach Broadhurst

### **PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Charlie Suriano, Clive Girdham, Huynh Nguyen Cover photo: Con Kassis by Charlie Suriano

### **ADVERTISING SALES**

GROUP MANAGER – NATIONAL ADVERTISING Keith Rozario keith@blitzmag.com.au SALES COORDINATOR Elizabeth Forrester

### MARKETING

MARKETING & EVENTS MANAGER Linda Higgins linda@blitzmag.com.au



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER SIIVIO MOREIII
GENERAL MANAGER Natalina Burley
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER Stefanie Morelli

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SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER Angelina Modica CUSTOMER SERVICE Frances Ricchetti, Robyn Newman Email: customerservice@blitzmag.com.au Phone: (03) 9574 8999 Fax: (03) 9574 8899 PO Box 4075, Mulgrave, 3170 Web: www.blitzmag.net

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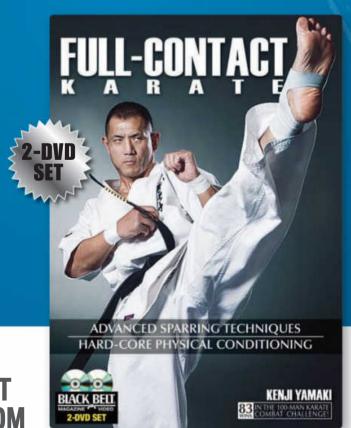
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# **NEWS & EVENTS**

# WHAT MAKES THE BEST MMA FIGHTERS?

University of Queensland PhD student Lachlan James wants to find the attributes needed to be an elite Mixed Martial Arts fighter.

James is looking for competitive MMA fighters to take part in a series of strength, power and endurance tests in an effort to find out the most important attributes for MMA.

James has done previous tests with MMA fighters in North America and wants to compare those stats with what he finds in Aussie fighters.

"MMA is a very complex sport physically, you need strength, power and endurance," James told *The Brisbane Times*.

"By doing these tests we will know which physiological qualities distinguish the pros from the amateurs. Once you know that, you can start designing training interventions more effectively."

Study one focuses on the strength and power characteristics of higher and lower level MMA competitors.

During a 90-minute testing session, participants will be required to perform:

• A jump squat under incremental

loads will be delivered to quantify the lower body power and velocity variables. For this test, the barbell is connected to highly sensitive instrumentation to acquire the

- A custom-designed wholebody static strength test utilising sensitive instrumentation.
- A one-repetition maximum (1RM) squat will then be performed to assess maximal lower-body dynamic strength.

The second study focuses on anaerobic and endurance characteristics of higher- and lower-level MMA competitors.

During a 60-minute testing session, participants will be required to perform a series of sprints at various distances, a repeated sprint test and an intermittent shuttle run test specifically designed for high-performance athletes.

Both amateur and professional MMA fighters are welcome to take part in the Australian trial. The criteria requires them to be male, uninjured and to have a verifiable competition record.

For further information or to take part in the study contact James at *I.james1@uq.edu.au* 





# Team Australia selected for 'Karate Olympics'

The International Karate Organization Kyokushinkaikan Australia (IKO) hosted its annual national tournament in Gymea, New South Wales on 31 May.

The event doubled as the selection tournament for the Australian team to fight at the 11th World Open Tournament, to be held in November in Tokyo, Japan.

The Australian team will consist of seven fighters, four of whom will be fully sponsored by the IKO in Japan, and the remaining three will be partly sponsored by the IKO.

The sponsorships will ensure the very best fighters in the world take part in what is regarded by many as the 'Karate Olympics', which is held in Tokyo every four years.

Steven Cujic was rewarded with an automatic selection to the Australian team after winning the super heavyweight division in the All-Japan Tournament

— Cujic is one of the favourites

Australia's six other fighters claimed their spots in the selection tournament. Anthony Tockar (North Bondi dojo) won the tournament with Reece Henderson (North Bondi dojo), Jesse Connolly (Revesby dojo),

David Tockar (North Bondi dojo), Nathan Goodin (QLD) and Shaune O'Farrell (QLD) also finishing in qualification positions.

The six will join Cujic as the Australian representatives at the World Open Tournament, which will be held over four days commencing 20 November 2015.

The results of the selection tournament represent a fine achievement for North Bondi dojo, with three representatives making the team.

Shihan Trevor Tockar, who fought in the first World Open Tournament in Tokyo in 1975, will have his two sons, Anthony and David, in the team.

The tournament is contested in an open weight division, meaning there is only one champion.

Competitors are not allowed any protective equipment except for a groin guard and mouth guard. Kicks to the legs, body and head along with punches and strikes to the body are full contact and scores are used to determine a victor if no knockout is achieved.

The tournament is expected to attract tens of thousands of spectators over four days and is acknowledged as the ultimate karate challenge.

# AUSTRALIA BECOMES MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL MIXED MARTIAL ARTS FEDERATION

Australia will have its own representative at the International Mixed Martial Arts Federation (IMMAF) after the formation of the Mixed Martial Arts Federation of Australia (MMAFA).

Joe Minehan, a

judo coach, will be the inaugural president of the MMAFA.

in Tokvo.

"We support the IMMAF in growing the sport to enable cohesive global competition," Minehan said. "We also applaud

and support the aim of the JMMAF to have an official place for MMA in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics."

Supporting Minehan will be senior MMA referee Cameron Quinn, Olympic athlete and coach Stewart Brain along with Xtreme Fighting Championships (XFC) promoter Justin Lawrence.

The IMMAF was founded in 2012 to act as a democratic global body for MMA.

# AKKA CELEBRATE 30TH YEAR OF NATIONAL CAMP

Australian Kyokushin Karate Association (AKKA) celebrated its 30th year of hosting its national camp on the Gold Coast in June with students and instructors from around the country.

Special guests included Shihan Duayne Davies, representing New Zealand, along with his wife Sensei Penita Davies, who is a two-time world champion.

The weekend began with the presentation of two Black-belt gradings to Peter Meredith (Kingscliff dojo) and Graeme Hall (Ipswich dojo). Meredith gained the rank of Sensei and 3rd Dan, while Hall became a sempai 1st Dan.

Shihancho Gary Viccars took the senior Black-belts for advanced kata along with the bunkai of the kata. Meanwhile, Sempai Chris Gale took all students up to Black-belt through a strenuous fitness session.

on knockdown techniques with various instructors giving their slant on each.

Day two began with a running session on the beach followed by senior instructors taking the students through various forms of training including self-defence, kata, evasion techniques, throws and submission holds.

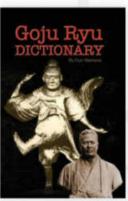
In a special session, Sensei Davies took female participants through a training program specially designed for them.

Students were thrilled with the experience and vowed to return next year.

AKKA would like to thank Shihancho Viccars, Shihan Duayne, Shihan Robbie Adams, Sensei Penita Davies along with senseis Frank Cirillo and David Nablusi.







# GOJU RYU DICTIONARY

Containing every conceivable Goju
Ryu karate term and more from
English to Japanese and vice versa.
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individuals from Ru Ru Ko to the
present-day masters like Morio
Higaonna and Teruo Chinen.

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# GEARING UP FOR THE 2016 ARNOLD CLASSIC AUSTRALIA

Preparations for the 2016 Arnold Classic Martial Arts Festival are already underway following the success of this year's inaugural Australian instalment.

The 2016 festival will be held over 18, 19 and 20 March, with plans to add even more martial arts styles to the growing championships.

The exciting art of kudo will join the returning martial arts championships of taekwondo, BJJ, AKF karate, kung fu, MMA, kickboxing, WASO/NAS and kyokushin.

This year saw more than 800 competitors of all ages battle to be crowned the Arnold Classic Champion of their chosen discipline and next year's festival will hopefully see even more sign up to compete.

For more information, tickets and to sign up and compete, visit www. acamultisport.com.au/



# TAKING THE FIGHT TO CANCER

During the month of September, the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) will stage the Big Aussie Barbie throughout the country. With Australian cricket legend Matthew Hayden on board as the official ambassador, it aims to raise over \$1 million in the fight against prostate cancer.

Over 20,000 Australian men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year, making it one of their greatest fights.

Cancer survivor Dave McDermott said martial arts gives an outlet for men to talk about their health.

"I've been through prostate cancer and I'm a survivor of it," he said. "I'm passionate for others not to go through the same sort of problems I went through."

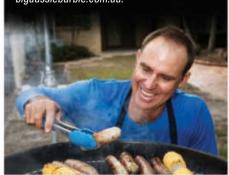
McDermott also runs World Wide Martial Arts, a proud supporter of the PCFA.

"We make a small boxing glove, which we retail for \$5, and for every sale, everything goes to prostate cancer awareness," McDermott said.

McDermott urged all men to go for a check-up.

"The sooner you get onto it, the better, rather than when you're in an urgent place and not prepared to make serious decisions," he said.

For more information visit www. bigaussiebarbie.com.au.



# Half a century of martial arts dedication

Patricia Harrington, the director and founder of Sosuishi-ryu Australia, is celebrating her 50th anniversary of teaching the Japanese martial art in Australia.

A special 50th anniversary celebration luncheon was held at the St. George Leagues Club on Sunday 12 July, with 91 past and present members of Sosuishi-ryu Australia in attendance. Each one received a commemorative certificate and made a speech.

a speech.
Also present was Dai Shihan Manzo
Shitama, the 16th inheritor of Sosuishi-ryu
Jujutsu Kai — a 366-year-old inherited
martial arts organisation from Japan — and
his son Shusaku Shitama, the future 17th
inheritor. Shihan Dennis Fink was also in
attendance, the international director of
Sosuishi-ryu Jujutsu Kai from the New
York headquarters.

The karo, or highest-ranking members, represented by Sensei Wojtek Bagadzinski, made a commemorative speech praising Harrington's impact in Australian martial arts. "Your contribution to the martial arts as

"Your contribution to the martial arts as an exemplary exponent, as a teacher, as a pioneer and propagator and as an author of books on the subject has been enormous," said Bagadzinski.



"And in particular, what you and Sensei Huxley have done for women's judo in Australia, and internationally, is unparalleled and frankly deserving of an Order of Australia. Each and every member of our organisation, past and present, owes you a huge debt of gratitude and so do thousands of judoka who've never even met you."

The following day, VIPs and instructors from the ceremony were guests at Parliament House where they enjoyed lunch with Jo Haylen, MP for Summer Hill.

with Jo Haylen, MP for Summer Hill.

In the evening all students gave a demonstration of judo, jujutsu and karate in honour of the special guests and Shusaku Shitama gave a demonstration of *laijutsu*, or Japanese's sword expertise.

# **Australian success at ISKA US Open**

Darcy Claveria is one of the many students who headlined Team Australia at the International Sports Karate Association (ISKA) US Open World Martial Arts Championships in Orlando, Florida on 3 and 4 July.

The Australian team, consisting of 25 students, returned home as the most successful to date.

Claveria, 10, finished third in

both point and clash sparring for athletes between 10 and 11 years old. He also made the top five in continuous sparring and placed 11th in kata.

Talking to the Liverpool City champion, Claveria said he was very proud of his achievements.

"Going over to America and competing, I wasn't sure if I would place anywhere, but now I feel very proud and very happy," Darcy said.



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# **NEWS & EVENTS**



# John Gill wins 12th world championship

Sydney martial arts instructor John Gill won his 12th world title at the International Mixed Martial Arts Federation World Championships of Amateur MMA in Las Vegas.

The 53-year-old won the Self-Defence Open Black-belt division, becoming the oldest open-age world champion in any sport. The victory follows up on his two title wins at the Winter Internationals in

January, bringing a total of 18 major international martial arts championship wins.

The latest title means Gill extends his record of the most world championships won in any sport by an Australian — swimmer Ian Thorpe is second best with 11 world swimming titles. Gill also holds the record

for the most martial arts titles for over 18-year-olds in Blackbelt world championships.

"I would like to thank Grandmaster Sung Soo Lee for teaching me such great techniques in hapkido and taekwondo, particularly hapkido, which has such a great variety of techniques," Gill said. "It has assisted me in winning the world self-defence title again."

Away from martial arts, Gill is a current five-time nominee for the Australian of the Year Award for his contribution to women's and children's safety. Gill is also an ambassador for the White Ribbon Foundation for the prevention of violence against women.

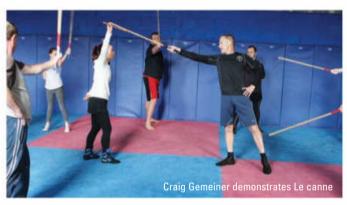
He has campaigned

for Australian and state governments to offer a free four-week self-protection course for every woman and child in Australia.

A motivational speaker, 6th Dan Black-belt and a master instructor in taekwondo and hapkido, Gill is celebrating 30 years of teaching.

Gill recently featured on Today and Studio 10, teaching women's self-protection techniques and has also previously appeared on Sunrise, The Morning Show and Kerri-Anne

To celebrate Gill's win, he is offering all *Blitz* readers a free video lesson. E-mail *admin@motivationalmasters.* com.au or visit www. martialartslessonsonline.com.



# SAVATE AND LA CANNE HIT WOLLONGONG

Gold Coast-based savate instructor Craig Gemeiner recently held a four-hour savate and la canne seminar for students and instructors representing WollongonG-based clubs Southern MMA - Wrestling-Kickboxing and Black Diamond Boxing, MMA & Fitness.

The emphasis of the four-hour seminar was to introduce attendees to the finer details of savate kickboxing skills and combinations. Throughout the training, a number of savate-related drills covered footwork, timing, distance and perception along with the tactical fighting aspects of French savate.

Towards the end of the day,

participants focused on fine-tuning the skills they had covered in preparation for testing for their first grade in savate — *Gant Bleu/* Blue Glove.

For the final hour of the seminar, participants were introduced to the energetic and fast moving system of French stick fighting called la canne. Adopted into the savate salles during the early 1800s, la canne is a combination of grace and efficiency, which is still practised today as a competitive sport or for self-defence.

The response to the seminar was positive with talk of instructors introducing savate into their curriculum and sponsoring more seminars in the future.

# Black-belt takes his martial arts to the water

Andy Meeks, a Filipino Blackbelt, has used his years of martial arts experience to help him excel in the very different sport of indoor rowing — claiming two Queensland titles.

Training out of Shihan
Martin Day's Combat Karate,
the veteran martial artist
attributes his mindset, body
weight and conditioning
training with Shihan Day as
the factor behind his strong
rowing performance.

Meeks smashed the 1000 metres and then the 500 metres on the same day on the Gold Coast recently. He competed in the Indoor Rowing Championship Heavyweight division in the 50 to 54 years age group.

"He put every inch of his fitness, strength and stamina into the blistering pace he set in both events," said Day.

"The runner-up didn't even come close in the 1000-metre sprint as Andy crossed the line a good 20 metres ahead at the finish. Andy has trained very hard for this result and is modest about the results."

The two title wins cap off a strong 12 months for Meeks, who won the Queensland and then the Australian titles, followed by the Pan Pacific titles in 2014.

His next goal is to retain his Pan Pacific titles in December.



# KRAV MAGA GLOBAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



Krav Maga Global (KMG), the largest krav maga organisation in the world, is giving individuals an opportunity to train in Israel under the tutelage of Master Eyal Yanilov.

Training options range from touring and training for all levels through to specialised courses such as the women's, children's and teen instructor courses along with mental conditioning and combat mindset courses.

KMG offers course camps

at three different levels
— practitioner, graduate
and expert.

Participants train together in dealing with assaults and multiple opponents along with gun, knife, stick and empty hand threats that are all part of the international KMG curriculum. Students then have the opportunity to test at the end of camps.

KMG camps are arduous with 10-hour training days along with testings that last between five to nine hours with minimal breaks.

Training is taken at various locations to give students a broader view of Israel.

If you would like to become a part of this professional and friendly community here in Australia, go to www. kravmagaglobal-anz.com.au/ for more information.

# LOST AND FOUND

Sascha Raeburn, an Australian actor, filmmaker and taekwondo Black-belt, has won a prestigious web award at the Melbourne WebFest — Raeburn's web series Lost in LA won the People's Choice award.

The Melbourne WebFest is an international festival that selects just 50 of the best web series in the world.

Raeburn writes, directs and produces the series, which has received awards for Best Comedy Series, Best Writing and Best Leading Actress at recognised film festivals. Raeburn occasionally utilises her martial arts background in her series, as well as films and advertisements.

Raeburn has been pitching her show to networks in LA and *Lost in LA* has also been selected and will be screened at the Korean web festival in Seoul.

For more updates and episodes go to *lostinlatheseries.com* 





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# MARTIAL MOVIES WITH CLINT MORRIS



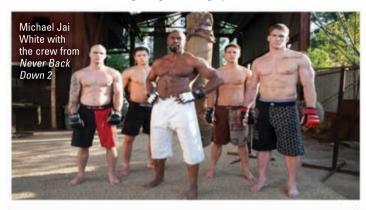
# **KUNG FU MOVIE CRUSHES JURASSIC WORLD**

After a limited cinema release Down Under, martial arts blockbuster SPL 2: A Time for Consequences is coming soon to DVD and download services. The sequel to Wilson Yip's 2005 actioner, starring Tony Jaa, Wu Jing, Simon Yam, Zhang Lin and Louis Koo, SPL 2 recently set a record opening for a contemporary action film in China, taking over US\$50 million in its first week of release — ultimately banking more than the dino-smash Jurassic World.

After busting local gangster Hong (Louis Koo) in an undercover operation, hard-boiled cop Kit (Wu Jing) is captured by Hong's men and wakes up in jail in Thailand facing a life sentence. While in police custody, Hong strikes a deal with Kit's supervisor, Wah (Simon Yam), to trade his freedom for Kit's. Wah traces Kit to Thailand and manages to convince new prison quard Chai (Tony Jaa) to help save Kit because Kit is one of the few eligible bone marrow donors who can save Chai's daughter, who's suffering from leukemia. Hong breaks out of jail and flees to Thailand to order Kit's execution — but when Kit learns of Hong's jailbreak, he's determined to bring him to justice.

# JAA WON'T BAK DOWN

Ong-bak action superstar Tony Jaa is rumoured to be filming a cameo appearance in the upcoming action sequel Never Back Down 3. The movie, starring MMA fighter Josh Barnett, Michael Jai White, Nathan Jones, Brahim Achabbakhe, and Ron Smoorenburg, will also be directed by White. Larnell Stovall is serving as fight choreographer on the movie.





# STILL UNDISPUTED

The fourth instalment in the *Undisputed* movie series is currently filming in Bulgaria. Scott Adkins reprises his role as Uri Boyka with Brahim Achabbakhe as a new opponent. Isaac Florentine, who has directed every Undisputed movie since Undisputed II, is back behind the camera.

Said Atkins recently, "It's been six years since we shot part three and the character of Yuri Boyka seems to have took [sic] on a life of his own. I'm sure this will be one of the toughest shoots in my career and I hope that you will ALL support this movie the right way when it gets released. We will do our best to give the fans of these genre movies what they want."

Tim Man serves as fight choreographer on the highly anticipated film.



# Crouching Tiger 2 to premiere in your...bedroom?

The *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* sequel will air on Netflix

early next year.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: The Green Legend is directed by Yuen Wo-Ping and stars Michelle Yeoh, Donnie Yen, Jason Scott Lee and Roger Yuan.

The movie-going experience is evolving quickly and profoundly, and Netflix is unquestionably at the forefront of that movement," said The Weinstein Company co-chairman Harvey Weinstein. "We are tremendously excited to be continuing our great relationship with Netflix and bringing to fans all over the world the latest chapter in this amazing and intriguing story.'

The sequel, based on a script by John Fusco, tells the story of a group of noble and legendary knights and soldiers who fight for peace and justice by protecting a 400-year-old blade named The Green Destiny in Qing Dynasty China.

In addition to directing, Yuen Wo-Ping — naturally — served as the film's action choreographer.

CLINT'S

ATTHE CINEMA: Ant-Man ON DVD & DIGITAL: Sword of Vengeance



# **LET'S GET FURIOUS!**

The classic 1980s martial arts movie Furious, directed by Tim Everitt and starring Simon and Phillip Rhee, was released on DVD in America in July. This was the first time the 1984 film had been released on DVD having only been available on (mostly bootlegged) VHS since its initial release.

The martial arts/sci-fi/fantasy favourite shot for next to nothing — has been illegally copied and downloaded thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of times via the Internet. There have also been an abundance of late-night cinema screenings for this amazing cult masterpiece, so Everitt decided it was due time to get in on that and teamed with a distributor to remaster, restore and release a high-quality DVD version.

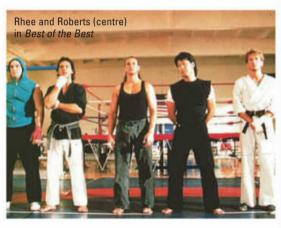
"It was growing as a VHS underground phenom', and people were even showing it theatrically, from old tape copies. We felt we should clean up the masters we had and get out the best version we could. Hopefully, it will get into the hands of the people who really like the movie," Everitt said.

# **Best of the Best is back!**

Actor, martial artist and producer Phillip Rhee says plans are afoot to bring back the Best of the Best martial arts movie series.

"We're going to reboot the whole franchise with a new cast... I'm going to bring in elements that nobody has ever seen before. I will produce the picture."

Rhee, who recently shot his first movie in 17 years, Underdog Kids, starred alongside the likes of Eric Roberts in Best of the Best (1989), Best of the Best 2 (1993). Best of the Best 3: No Turning Back (1995) and Best of the Best 4: Without Warning (1998).





# **BLADE IS READY TO RETURN**

Wesley Snipes says he's met with Marvel about possibly reprising Blade, the vampire who hunts vampires, for a fourth action film in the series. "[Blade 4] is controlled by Marvel and we did have a really productive and a wonderful meeting and we discussed a number of things," Snipes told Deadline. "I don't know where it's on their schedule at this point, that hasn't been decided. I guess it's still up in the air."
Snipes, who last played Blade in 2004's Blade

Trinity, says it's possible he might even end up in a different Marvel comic book movie. "I've always been a fan of these pieces and adaptations and it'd be nice to be a part of the family again. But if we don't do a Blade 4 or something else with Marvel, we'll do something else.'











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Supplier: Martial arts suppliers or www.morgansports.com.au

### **SAMURAI KATANA UMBRELLA**

This durable, button-opening umbrella from Kikkerland is not only cool to look at, but gripping is made easy with an extra-long moulded handle, making it perfect for defending yourself...against the rain. (Like most standard umbrellas, it is probably not sturdy enough to be used as a self-defence tool more than once).

Designed to resemble a katana, this metre-long lightweight brolly also comes with a shoulder strap so it can be worn over the shoulder when not in use — perfect for those prone to leaving their stuff behind on public transport.

Price: \$54.99

Supplier: www.yellowoctopus.com.au







# **FUJI SUPARAITO GRAPPLING GI**

One of the lightest grappling kimonos on the market, the latest comp gi from the renowned Fuji brand weighs in at 500-to-700 grams less than most other standard gis (at just 1300 grams total for an A2 size). The Suparaito, which means 'super light' in Japanese, is part of Fuji's SUMMIT product line, designed for the serious competitor at an entry-level price. Featuring a pearl-weave jacket with a ripstop collar and pants with extra stitching, Suparaito is IBJJF approved and comes in white and blue.

**Price:** From \$169.95 including delivery **Supplier:** www.thegifactory.com.au

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# **Who is Richard Norton?**

Shihan Richard Norton's 30-year movie career includes 60+ feature films with such greats as Jackie Chan and Chuck Norris — and the speed you see on screen is real! A Master of Karate, Chuck Norris' Chun Kuk Do, Thai Kickboxing, BJJ & various Japanese weapons, Norton has 45 years of martial arts experience.



# Tai Chi Tourist, Kung Fu Purist

The world is full of amazing places but for martial artists, and especially kung fu enthusiasts, it's hard to beat a journey to Shaolin. *Blitz* spoke to Rick Creamer, the photographer from GoE Martial Arts Tours and a Black-belt in his own right, about his treasured travel experiences from training on the Great Wall of China to being tutored by leading kung fu masters in ancient temples.

INTERVIEW BY ZACH BROADHURST

ick, what is the idea behind GoE Tours?

GoE Tours is a niche tour provider based in Australia that takes small groups to interesting locations around the world, specialising in meditation and martial art tours. Our aim is to connect the traveller to the essence of the destination and at the same time experience everything the destination has to offer...anybody can travel to any destination in the world now without a tour provider. [so] our aim is to provide an experience that cannot be found anywhere else.

# How did you get involved in taking tours to China?

GoE Tours is a family-run business, headed by Michelle Boughen and myself, working with locally trained expert tour providers in each country we visit.

Michelle started GoE Tours in 2004 by running 'shopping and meditation' tours to Bali, Indonesia. As a meditation teacher and experienced traveller, Michelle found that other tour providers were only offering services to the average traveller. She saw a niche and created GoE Tours. Since then, Michelle has guided meditation tours through Cambodia, Indonesia, India, South America, Easter Islands and China.

I'm a Black-belt martial artist and I started at age seven studying ninjutsu. My passion for martial arts has led me to seek out opportunities to train overseas and develop my passion even more. I've been lucky to study kung fu in China, silat in Indonesia, muay Thai in Thailand and silambam in Malaysia. After the life-changing opportunity to train privately at the Shaolin Temple alongside the Shaolin monks, Michelle and I knew that other people had to also experience this amazing 'Mecca' of martial arts in the same way — this is how GoE Martial Art Tours began.

What is involved in your

**Shaolin tour?** 

Tour consists of

styles of kung fu

morning kung fu

and meditation

session on the

China in Beijing this will set the

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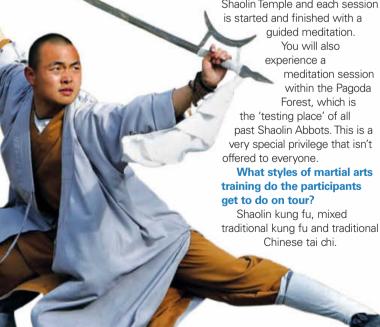
Beijing and taking a traditional tai chi session at the Temple of Heaven.

There will be a mix of private and non-private training sessions that are held in a very large school near Shaolin — with up to 20,000 students. The non-private sessions will be with local students studying with local masters, training as the locals train. Another kung fu master holds the private sessions in different locations away from the school.

All of the private kung fu sessions begin and end with a short, guided meditation to allow for increased focus and strength. These are run by Michelle, who has more than 25 years' experience as a meditation teacher.

At Shaolin, you are met by a Shaolin kung fu master and the training plan is outlined to you. As each group is different, with different experience levels attending, no two trips or training plans are ever the same. During the time within Shaolin, training is provided twice a day — morning and afternoon.

The training sessions are designed to challenge you both mentally and physically; however, you will see progress after each session. We train at different locations around the Shaolin Temple and each session is started and finished with a



# **5 MINUTES** WITH RICK CREAMER

# Who takes your training sessions while in Shaolin?

A Shaolin monk or master takes the training at Shaolin and sometimes there may be two different instructors. All of the private instructors can speak English; however, if the circumstance arises where the instructor cannot speak English, an interpreter will be there to help.

"The training sessions are designed to challenge you both mentally and physically; however, you will see progress after each session."

# How do you think participants on the tour benefit as martial artists?

The benefits are endless. Some of the main benefits you can expect to gain from the tour are: increased focus and strength from the guided meditations and kung fu training; increased knowledge of Shaolin kung fu and Chinese culture; greater confidence from attending the tour; enhanced awareness of personal strengths and areas of growth; spiritual growth; increased vitality from training in such a pure environment... and greater humility.

# Besides all the physical activities on offer during the tour, what else do the participants get up to?

We understand that there needs to be a balance of 'tourist' activities on such a tour to allow for 'grounding' and digesting the experience that we offer, so we make sure we take in a lot of the tourist sites along the way and allow for shopping at each new destination.

What are some of your best memories from previous Shaolin tours?





Gaining access to the only standing building from the original Shaolin Temple was amazing — standing in the foot indentations of the stone floor where past Shaolin masters pounded their feet during prolonged training. Our guide at the time explained that in his nearly 200 visits to Shaolin, never has he seen anyone allowed into that area of the temple.

Other highlights include watching the sun rise over the mountains while training on the Great Wall of China, being presented with a Shaolin sword from the Shaolin Temple's sword factory, training privately in sword play with a Shaolin monk, meeting and making new friends with

the monks, and watching the people attending experience personal and spiritual growth while on tour.

# What is your role with the tours?

I'm the official photographer and videographer on the tours. It's my job to capture the whole experience for the participants so they will always have the experience with them in both photo and video form. This way the participants can be in the moment and not have to see the trip through their camera screen.

After the trip, all participants receive a copy of all photos plus the daily training that was completed at each of the schools. I also train alongside the participants when I can;

however, my main role is to capture the trip.

# How did you come to work for the company?

After living in Indonesia for two years running an event and tour company, I came back to Australia to help Michelle expand GoE Tours into other destinations around the world.

# What effect has being involved in the tours had on you personally?

Personally, I cannot explain it. I remember the first time entering the Shaolin Temple I felt a numbness. It had been a dream since I started training in martial arts to come to Shaolin. After watching all those old Jackie Chan movies like *Shaolin Wooden Men*, I knew I had to get there one day.

When I actually stepped foot inside the temple, I was overcome with emotion — I burst into tears. The monk in charge asked what was wrong and after it was explained that this was a dream of 20 years coming true for us, the monk asked everyone to leave the room and allow for us to have a moment just for us inside the temple — that was such a high honour.

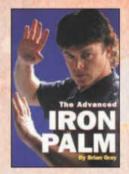
Since that day, my training has become more specific. Just as a fighter trains for a fight, I now train to become a better martial artist: more patient, more focused, more understanding, more humble and more appreciative.

Aside from a pretty amazing holiday and personal growth, what do you think participants can gain from doing a GoE tour in terms of broadening their cultural understanding?

Apart from the added benefits I've already spoken about, we hope that participants are able to see the destination in a new light with an appreciation that wasn't there before. Not to mention the new friends you will make for life, as what you experience will be with you forever.

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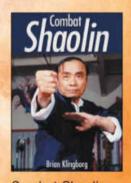
Kung Fu: History, Philosophy and Technique



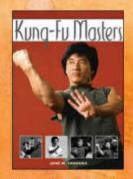
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# 

For four decades Con Kassis has dedicated his life to karate. As a young man training in Shito-ryu karate his drive to learn from the very best in the world lead him to Japan and the son of Kenwa Mabuni, founder of the Shito system. His passion for all aspects of the art saw him become one of the World Karate Federation's youngest ever kata judges and he has produced state and national champions as a coach and has even helped write a book on Shitoryu karate — where will karate take him next?

STORY BY ZACH BROADHURST | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLIE SURIANO

hile Con Kassis' journey in karate has spanned 40 years, with no end in sight just yet, you have to look far back to when he was just a teenager to see his simple beginnings in the art.

"Around 1975 I first became interested in karate," recalls Con.

"For one reason or another, I often had to fight to overcome some difficult times. Unfortunately I started karate for the wrong reasons, but ironically karate has taught me something totally different."

Throughout his teens and into his early twenties, Con dedicated himself to the discipline of karate, but it was a transition to Shito-ryu that would put him on a whole new path.

"My first experience in karate was with the Shotokan and Kyukushinkai schools," says Con.

"For various reasons there was a separation between myself and my previous teachers. Then in February of 1981 I began to practise Shito-ryu, a lesser-known system in Australia during that time.

"In 1987 I was introduced to Kenei Mabuni, the eldest son of Kenwa Mabuni — founder of the Shito system — and successor as recognised by the Japan Karate Federation. It was then that my life changed forever."

Con was struck by Kenei Mabuni's presence and skill, even though he was almost in his eighties at the time, but it is his ability to have a laugh and make training pleasurable that has always impressed Con.

"I have always been in awe of his presence and his amazingly technical training, which he only provided to a select few students," says Con.

"He is extremely skilled in making training enjoyable and demonstrating his humorous side. I realise that this quality is often missing in many teachers.

"His patience and calmness around students and karateka from all over the world, occasionally during difficult times, is also something to be admired. I am still trying to emulate him in this area, because its such a wonderful skill to master."

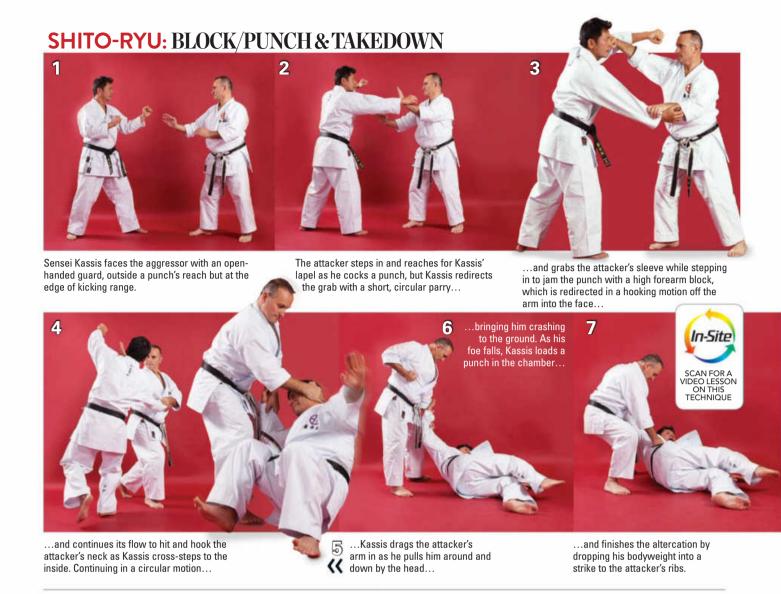
Con doesn't take his tutelage from Mabuni for granted, after all, it took more than a dozen trips to Japan to prove he was worthy to learn Mabuni's father's renowned discipline. "After the first 20 trips to Osaka, Japan, Mabuni Sensei recognised my love and commitment towards his father's karate system," explains Con.

"I believe because of this he was very generous in his tuition with me. After almost 40 trips to his dojo and hosting him in my home in Melbourne many times, and being fortunate enough to follow him around the globe, I realise how fortunate I have been to learn something very special.

"Knowing what to teach, how to teach it and what order to teach it in is a great skill, which I have acquired from him. The vast number of kata and their meaning and characteristics I have acquired from his teaching is something I will treasure for life."

Despite the financial costs and Kenei Mabuni, now





nearing 100 years old, Con still continues to frequent Japan, determined to continue and refine his Shito education.

"I still travel to his home in Osaka repeatedly," says Con.

"Fortunately, or maybe unfortunately, the Shito-ryu system has some 60 kata. I always feel I am a beginner in his dojo and my thirst for knowledge is sometimes out of control. I must say that it has often tested my financial status — nevertheless I always feel compelled to go there."

The reason for the large number of kata in the Shitoryu system dates back to Kenwa Mabuni himself and his eagerness to learn from any great master he came across.

"Kenwa Mabuni first trained under one of the most famous

and prolific teachers in Okinawa — Anko Itosu," explains Con.

"Itosu taught Mabuni the Shurite system. The Shurite system was also learnt and practised by the Shotokan founder, Funakoshi, and for that reason Shotokan shares many kata with Shito.

"Following the death of Itosu, the young Mabuni was still hungry for knowledge and was later introduced to Kanryo Higaonna — the master for Nahate — by his good friend Miyagi — the founder of Gojuryu — who was also Higaonna's student. That's why Goju also shares the same kata with Shito.

"Kenwa Mabuni went on to learn many other kata and techniques from various other great masters during that time, which is why the vast number of

# "ONE MUST UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPORT AND TRADITIONAL KARATE-DO, BUT I BELIEVE THERE IS A PLACE FOR BOTH"

kata exists in his system."

While many of Shito-ryu's kata share origins with other styles from the region, there are still many that were uniquely devised by Mabuni.

"Amongst mainland Japan's major *ryu-ha* (styles) there are several kata belonging only to Shito-ryu," says Con, "Kata such as Aoyagi, which was devised by Kenwa Mabuni especially for women's self-defence — a very radical decision at the time

by Mabuni to encourage and introduce women to karate.

"Myojo is another kata devised by Mabuni, influenced by the kata Nipaipo due to the use of *sashite* (an advanced Shito-ryu application). Mabuni was influenced by Uechi to develop the kata Shimpa, due to the extensive use of *kuri uke* (a characteristic technique of Uechi Ryu).

"Juroku is another kata developed by him during the 16th year of the Showa period, hence the name of the kata which translates to 'sixteen'.

"Two extremely popular kata seen on the international scene are Chatanyara Kusanku and Nipaipo, both exclusive to Shitoryu. Chatanyara Kusanku gets its name from a town in Okinawa called 'Chatan' combined with the name of the teacher responsible for devising the kata, Yara. Kusanku is the name of a Chinese kempo master who taught in Okinawa."

Con's immense knowledge of Shitoryu's kata history is due to his decades of training, but even more so due to his years as a World Karate Federation (WKF) judge. At the time of his appointment Con was the WKF's youngest judge and one of just 25 officials around the world.

"In 1994 the Australian Karate Federation (AKF) didn't have any qualified kata judges within the WKF. Previous renowned kata judges such as Tino Ceberano, Frank Nowak and Paul Mitchell had already retired from the WKF.

"The late John Newman, AKF president at the time, suggested I attempt to qualify as World Kata Judge. The required minimum age was 35, my age at the time, and I happened to be the youngest applicant — it was my biggest achievement as only four out of 64 applicants passed."

In the more than two decades that have passed since he first became a judge, Con has witnessed the evolution of competition kate in that time, with a definite emphasis on degree of difficulty and a push towards the most thrilling styles.

"Sports people today, especially in high-level competition, will perform mainly karate's most advanced kata, such as Suparinpei, Anan, Chatanyara Kusanku, Nipaipo, Unsu, Gankaku and Gojushiho," savs Con.

"The rules of competition today require judges to consider the degree of difficulty of the kata, as is done in some Olympic sports such as diving and gymnastics.

"The advanced kata are often the most visually exciting to watch. Needless to say, that's exactly what the athlete is going to perform. Of course some schools are very involved with the sport and will predominantly teach and practise the kata that are favoured by the kata judges."

While performing the most difficult kata makes for a very exciting display, Con feels that even though students can perform them perfectly, very few understand the true meaning behind them.

"The sport of karate has definitely changed kata forever," he says.

"As I am a member of the WKF Referee Commission and previously Chairman, I could easily talk on this topic forever, but in a nutshell I would estimate that unfortunately today 90 per cent of contestants do not have a deep understanding of the kata they perform.

"There are children as young as 10 years old performing some of karate's most advanced kata. Some of these kata take a lifetime of study to understand.

"One must understand the difference between sport and traditional karate-do, but I believe there is a place for both.

While Con has a strong belief in teaching students the meaning behind the kata they perform, he also understands that it is just the nature of the beast that some people only want to learn the physical side of the martial art.

"In most of my kata training and teaching, the key purpose is for my students to understand the proper technique, it's characteristics and the kata meaning," he says.

"Without applying these important elements, the true bunkai (meaning) of kata will be lost forever.

"Having said that, there are many students who I teach today purely to be competitive, or to win in the sporting arena. I know I have said this before, the sport has and continues to hurt karate's original meaning. If one is taking the sport seriously

then they must be able to keep it separate from the traditional and original meaning."

But just because Con has accepted the state of karate at the moment, it hasn't influenced his standards when it comes to promoting his students.

'The teaching of bunkai is high on my personal agenda, because my teacher covers it extensively," says Con.

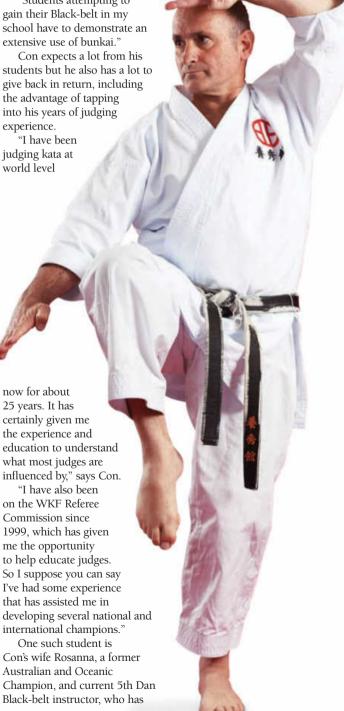
"Students attempting to gain their Black-belt in my school have to demonstrate an extensive use of bunkai."

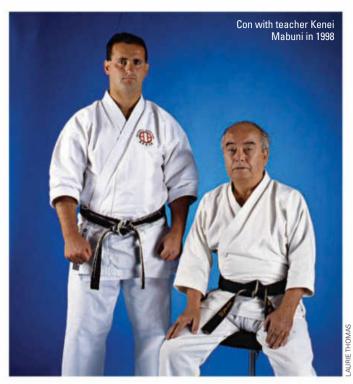
students but he also has a lot to give back in return, including the advantage of tapping into his years of judging

judging kata at world level

definitely reaped the benefits of his extensive knowledge.

'Whilst he has been travelling the world for so many years. judging at so many events, that exposure has given him a bit of an edge to his teaching," says Rosanna.





"I mean, his fundamental knowledge of kata comes from his teacher, Master Kenei Mabuni, but as a judge he knows exactly what it takes to make the kata presentable in the competition arena.

"He knows what is required to be a good karateka but he also knows what is required to be a champion. Of course his students, myself included, have the advantage to learn so much from him."

Being able to so easily access Con's wealth of knowledge is something Rosanna almost feels bad about, considering the lengths he went through to attain it all.

"In a way I feel guilty that I have his knowledge readily available to me," explains Rosanna, "whereas he had to work so hard for it and spend enormous amounts of time and money obtaining his knowledge over the last few decades. His students probably don't realise how much of an advantage it is for them."

And while they may not understand the magnitude of the advantage being one of Con's students brings, his knowledge and attitude towards passing that information on means he has a commanding presence in the dojo.

"Con is very understated, he had and still has a quiet and humble presence, but at the same time he has this indescribable way of holding everyone's attention," says his wife.

"He never demands respect, people just offer it automatically."

Respect can often be gained in a variety of ways, with some preferring to go down the path of intimidation and strength, but it's a more open and easy style that Con runs with.

"He creates a comfortable atmosphere and he is generous with his knowledge, giving the right amount of detail according to the level of the student, and delivering it in an enjoyable way," says Rosanna.

"It's not uncommon to see adults in his classes laughing and enjoying themselves."

Rosanna's own karate voyage started in 1992, when she began training at one of Con's branches run by his brother, Michael Kassis, but what started as a physical journey has become just as much a mental one.

"I always wanted to do karate to become strong and fit

# "IN TIME I LEARNT THAT KARATE WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO FULFILL MY SUPERFICIAL NEEDS, AS THAT WOULD ONLY SERVE TO DIMINISH THE VALUE OF WHAT I WAS LEARNING."

and be admired by others, but somehow this need evolved and turned into a need to better my character," explains Rosanna.

"Con always taught me to reflect on my words and actions. He also taught me to consider other people's thoughts and feelings, to question how I could become a better person.

"So, in time I learnt that karate was not supposed to fulfill my superficial needs, as that would only serve to diminish the value of what I was learning. I'm more respectful now of what karate can really teach you and I would never have reached this level of introspection without him."

"I would say that I have influenced Rosanna in seeing karate as being more than just a hobby, but also as a very rewarding life long journey," adds Con.

"I think my own enthusiasm and love of karate has rubbed off on her quite a lot!"

Con and Rosanna's student/teacher relationship isn't a one-way street, however, with Rosanna opening her husband's eyes to making karate a financial opportunity.

"Rosanna has allowed me to see that my passion for karate can also be pursued as a living," says Con.

"Particularly as people nowadays

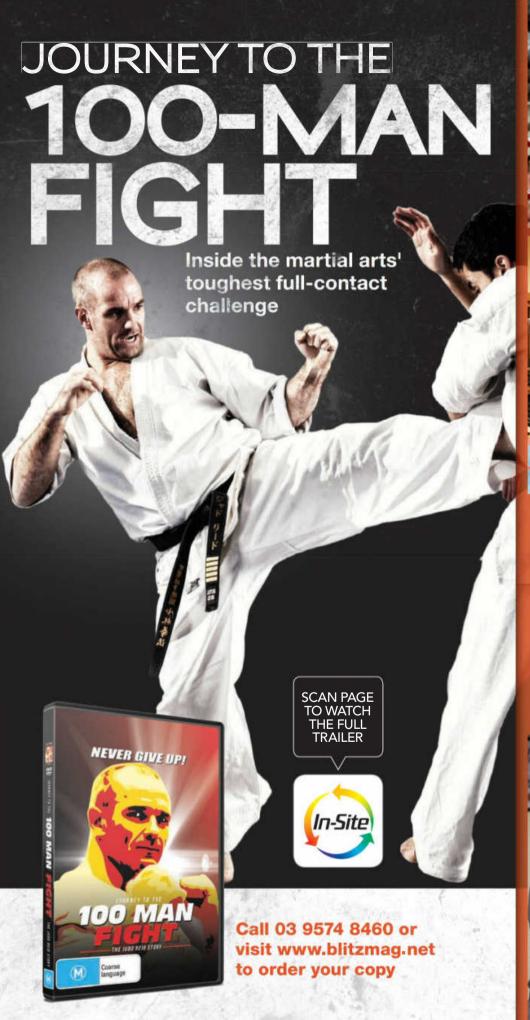
seek professional environments for their children and themselves to learn karate."

They have also both had a big effect on each other's teaching styles and the way they structure classes at the Kassis Karate Academy.

"Con and I have very similar teaching styles. Basics are a fundamental for both of us and so is kata," explains Rosanna.

"We believe in spending the time teaching accurate technique but we both agree that fun and enjoyment must be incorporated in every lesson. I think I'm the innovator in the team,







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coming up with ways to keep kids entertained and enjoying their training.

"Then Con feeds off that and is able to bond really well with the students. We spend a lot of time talking to each other about lessons and drills, and ways of improving our classes to maximise the experience for the student, and it's interesting how we often find ourselves on the same wavelength."

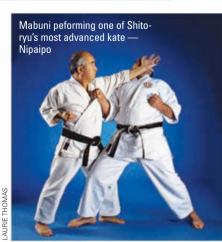
While Rosanna's days of competing are now behind her, Con's work as an international

judge prompted her to stay involved in competition karate and work towards being one of the world's top female judges.

There are a handful of great female Aussie accredited judges, but only Rosanna is qualified as a World Kata Judge A — the highest qualification within the World Karate Federation.

"I think I moved into judging because I needed to stay connected to competition in some capacity," says Rosanna.

"It's an exciting aspect of karate that I love and really wanted to continue to be involved in somehow. Of course with Con being heavily involved in the field, that would have been an influencing factor on a subconscious level for me. But judging and refereeing is highly challenging and I've come to really enjoy it. The journey may be nearing half a century for Con, but his commitment to his art and spreading the lessons of his teachers has no end in sight yet.





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# 

Applying MMA skills to self-defence

Whether you're all about 'ultimate fighting' or have a solid background in a sporting-focused martial art of the stand-up or groundfighting variety, it pays to give not only a little thought to applying your skills to the realities of a street confrontation, but some serious training time to making it possible. Here, VT-1 MMA, BJJ and PREP krav maga coach Liam Resnekov shows how to turn your sparring skills into a street-ready arsenal.

STORY & INSTRUCTION BY LIAM RESNEKOV

# THE SPORT FOUNDATION

Let's agree to skip straight to chapter two in the 'sport martial arts for the street' discussion. Sports martial arts are excellent foundations for self-defence; from the average hobbyist to the serious competitor, combat sportspeople are in good shape, train with resistance and aren't easy to rattle with a bit of contact. Further, most competitors are used to dealing with different body shapes and sizes, and very much akin to adjusting strategies on the fly, even under extreme pressure.

This clinic is all about the adjustments needed to cover all bases needed for a street situation. I've been fortunate to sit on both sides of the table as a krav maga instructor and a trainer of UFC competitors, and over the years we formed the PREP program to help traditional and sport martial artists adapt their art for street effectiveness without losing the base they've spent years developing.

# [STAIRWELL MMA]

Being aware of the clothes being used against you is important in self-defence, but the normal rules apply while clinching — and now you can use your head for more than thinking. Don't be afraid to choke the opponent with their clothing, too.









The issue here is whether or not the practitioner recognises that the situation has become lethal. The advantage of selfdefence-focused arts is that they may assume that every situation is potentially lethal, but the long-term sustainability of this kind of training is questionable, not to mention the mental health consequences. So, the goal of PREP krav maga is to allow the martial artist to continue their regular, healthy training with some challenging and fun adjustments, so that they can confidently relax, "train hard and walk in peace", as the father of krav maga, Imi Lichtenfeld, would say.

# PROTECTING ANOTHER

Don't focus on only one attacker or the other might attack where you are weak: your family or friends.

Focus on striking first, then moving between both attackers and using one as an obstacle for the other.













# THE ART OF ESCAPE

Avoiding trouble is paramount to your wellbeing, but sometimes you just can't get out of its way. The old 'runfu' — 'I'll just run' — is often thrown out there, but people forget that not all running is equal. The fact is advocators of this concept don't actually train running in any manner that resembles a system. There are certainly fundamental movements to escaping: look at your average rugby club's warm-up and ask yourself, why are these not in every selfdefence program?

Escaping can be simplified: it's getting from point A to point B with minimal damage and avoiding obstacles. Rugby players are masters of this. Think

about it: a rugby player has to get an object, the ball, from point A to point B without being injured or tackled to the ground. Substitute the ball with a child or a handbag, modify with some testing and you have the martial art of escaping. Integrating these movements and systems into your daily training is easy, fun and an absolute must if you are serious about self-defence.

# **PROTECTING OTHERS**

So, you are good at escaping, which will serve you well, but what happens when your family is with you? The quickest way from hero to zero is to leave your wife standing there at the first sign of danger. The bottom line is that running is not always an option and third-

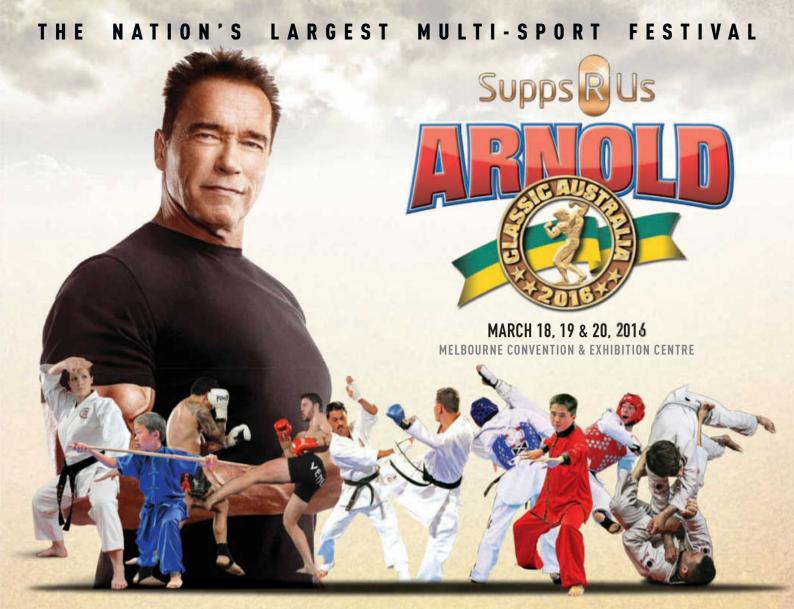
party protection is something you need to consider. In this case, it is less about technical prowess and more about designing drills to allow you to adapt your sports skills in a situation where you may be protecting a loved one. These PREP krav maga drills prepare you for this and are also a lot of fun, so give them a go:

Third-party protection (drill one) – Place a heavy bag or person behind you. Your partner's goal is to touch or strike the bag while yours is to prevent him doing so.

Third-party protection (drill two) – As in drill one, place a heavy bag or person behind you. This time you have two partners attacking and your goal is to prevent them doing so.



The A–B Drill – Your aim is to get from A to B; your partners (a group of two-to-eight people) will use boxing gloves or shields to prevent you



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from getting to it. We do this in 30-second bursts and it's a great workout. (Note: Do not strike the back of the head, and also be aware of stepping on people's outstretched limbs.)

### IT'S TIME TO TALK

In sport, the bell rings and you fight. As a form of showmanship, a competitor will often escalate the situation with pre-fight shenanigans. In a street situation, where avoiding confrontation is the key, your goal is to de-escalate.

One of the advantages of sport is that it helps you to stay calm; competition preparation often deals with adrenaline and 'fight or flight' response. What often throw martial artists are the sudden, non-physical bursts of aggression. Test it out for yourself (with some sensitivity to your audience): Before commencing sparring, open with a sudden burst of aggressive profanities and threats. 'I'm going to cave your f\*\*\*ing head in!' is always a good place to start — sure, it's shocking, but it will put your average martial artist off kilter and render a lot of their skill sets unusable until they regain their mental footing. The mind is your best weapon both in sport and the street, so

inoculating yourself to this is a very important, though often forgotten, part of self-defence. (It's also sure to get some laughs from stunned onlookers, so again, be sensitive.)

On the offensive, using your words is also an incredibly effective way to distract an aggressor before bursting into your blitz. One of the best tools of 'street fighters' (aka troublemakers) is the verbal distraction: 'Can I have a cigarette?'...'What's the time?'... 'Is that your mate?'...'What's your problem?' ...then BANG, you are looking up at the ceiling.

These PREP krav maga drills teach you, first, how to deal with this tactic, and then how to turn the tables and use this tactic yourself:

Distraction (drill one): Before launching a blitz, have your partner shove you and swear aggressively at you. Try to notice how you feel in the pit of your stomach when you take the drill seriously. It can be quite off-putting.

Distraction (drill two): Practise utilising a question before entering into a blitz on the pads. Repetition is key. Use simple, open-ended questions that can't be answered with yes or no. As they begin to answer, launch the blitz.

# [RAPTOR ATTACK]

A common ploy among thugs is to have one distract you while the other attacks from the side, often at the expense of his friend.





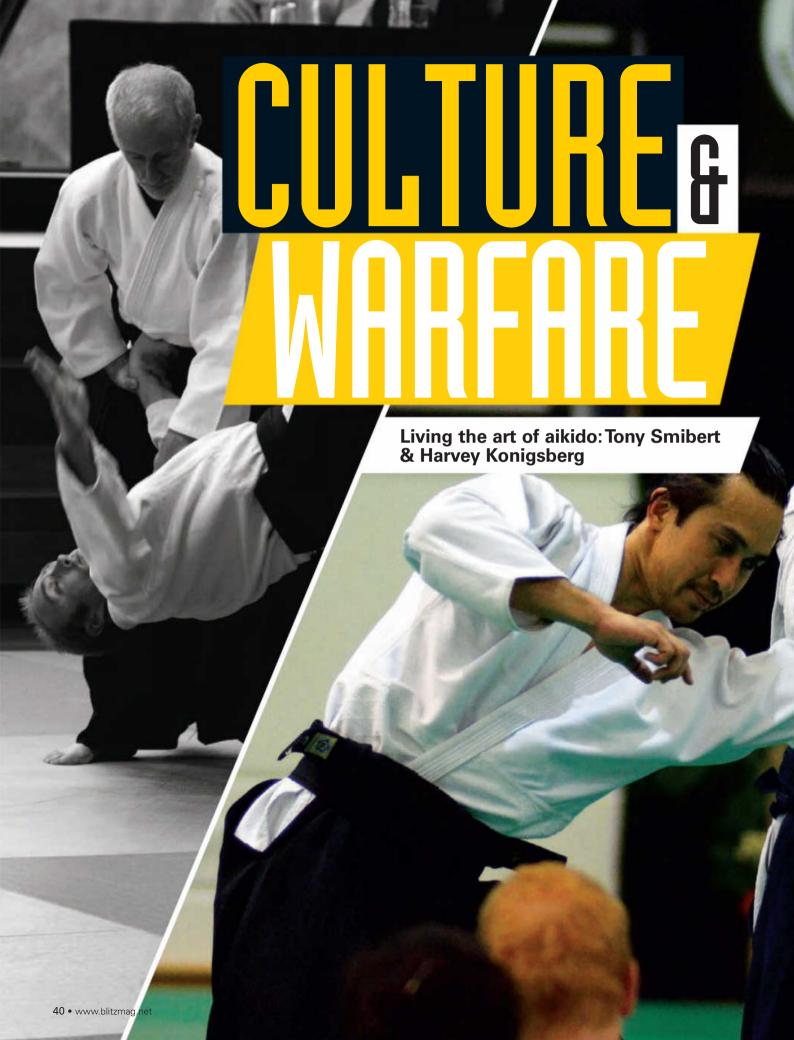


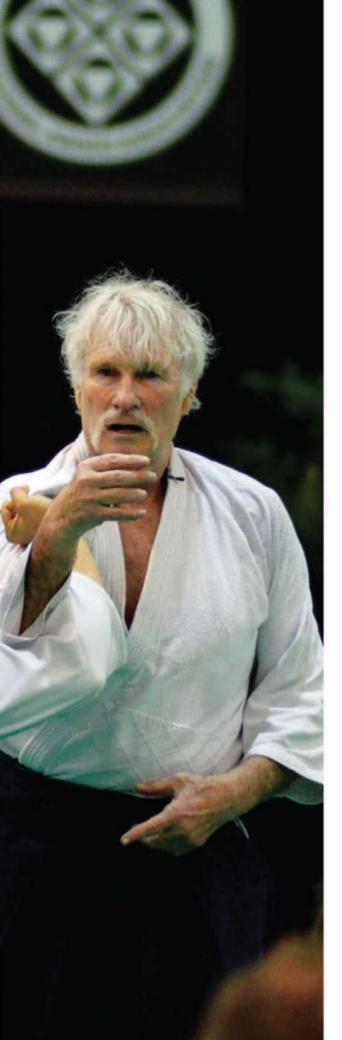


The upshot is, both sporting and traditional martial arts are a fantastic foundation for surviving a street situation in terms of your skills and physical attributes, and your mind. But adaptability is key, and if you don't drill some street-specific tactics and skills, you won't be able to do it on the spot, when it counts.

Check out the next issue of *Blitz* for part two of this feature covering the six vital elements of street survival when things get physical.







They are two artists, both visual and martial; one is a former boxer, both are men of high standing in the world of aikido. Australia's Shihan Tony Smibert and New York's Harvey Konigsberg have seen and learnt a lot during their many years following the way of bun bu ryo do — the Japanese concept of the study of culture and warfare — together. In the 50th anniversary year of the Aiki-Kai's introduction of aikido to Australia, Mike Clarke spoke to both men about their discoveries in the ways of aiki.

STORY BY MIKE CLARKE

wo men face each other across the dojo; the air is hushed, the quiet tick of a clock is the only sound breaking the silence. There is a sense of anticipation, a stillness hanging in the air. One man moves rapidly forward, his open hand sweeping down toward the other's face...then nothing! The target has moved, spun in a tight semi-circle to face the same way as the incoming force; the attacking hand is grasped, the wrist turned. The attacker is now on the defence, but too late; the energy in the strike has been captured and directed elsewhere. Joints along the attacking arm become locked in opposition; there are few options left but to go with the change in direction and land safely from the throw that is now unavoidable.

Aikido, a martial art that has captured the imagination of millions of people worldwide, is often described as a 'soft' fighting method; a way of combat that relies less on strength than it does on timing, establishing the centre and setting up appropriate angles. Superficially, that wouldn't be a bad description of aikido, but as with every martial art, appearances can be deceiving, for there are many more elements at play. If all that were required to throw people to the ground was brute strength, then why bother practising a martial art?

There are few things obvious about aikido, the way of harmony, of love and respect for others; the physical practice serves merely as a means to an end: a path through life made difficult by the commitment to practise and yet which holds the promise of an immense return for your efforts. As with all forms of budo, as progress is made in aikido

the rewards begin to appear, small at first, but growing in significance as the years go by.

Two men who have spent the greater part of their lives training in aikido are Harvey Konigsberg of New York, and Australia's own Tony Smibert. At 75 and 66 years old respectively, neither man appears ready to stop practising aikido, or searching for that moment of sublime subtlety in the dojo when time slows to a standstill, the world becomes silent, and bodies fly through the air as if by some invisible hand. Although they came to aikido on opposite sides of the planet, their love of the art has brought them together many times, and today they stand as shining examples of the rewards aikido has to offer to those who pursue it with integrity.

As well as being aikido sensei (7th Dan Shihan), both men are world-renowned artists. Konigsberg is perhaps best known for his series of paintings capturing the movement and energy of whales, and has exhibited throughout North America. His work is held in many corporate collections around the world, including that of the Mitsukoshi Corporation and Gulf Oil. Tony Smibert's art is known and collected worldwide. Famous for his watercolour landscapes as well as his work capturing the essence of Japanese minimalism, Smibert is also a visiting artist researcher at Tate Britain in London.

During Aiki Kai Australia's 50th anniversary celebrations in Melbourne earlier this year, I sat down with Konigsberg Sensei to discuss his long association with aikido and how, if at all, his art and his martial art had influenced each other. A week later, at the Tenchi



aikido dojo in Tasmania, I did the same with Smibert Sensei; what follows are extracts from those conversations.

While Tony Smibert and I have been friends for well over 20 years, this was my first meeting with Harvey Konigsberg. Konigsberg is old but not yet spent — he confessed to being a little stiff after training these days, but he is still energetic and willing to act as *uke* (the person 'receiving' the technique and thereby taking the fall) for younger training partners; an act of magnanimity and humility, and an example to others who may feel their rank somehow relieves them of the obligation to give as well as receive. His body carried the signs of age, his face reflecting the passage of time, but his eyes sparkled like those of a much younger man, and his handshake hinted at the subtle strength still present. This was no 'old man'.

"I was going to be a boxer," Konigsberg said, "but then I decided to go to school." This was how our conversation began; "So I moved to Florida and attended university in Miami, where I studied painting and a few other things, but I majored in art. I always had a passion for art and the creative



20process. When I think about it, I've been fortunate in my life that I have been able to spend it pursuing my two passions of art and aikido."

After graduation, in 1965 Konigsberg moved back to New York and in that same year had his first encounter with aikido. "An artist friend of mine told me one day about aikido. The dojo was just a couple of blocks away from me, so I decided to go and have a look with a good friend of mine who, like me, was also a boxer. At that time, Yamada Sensei hadn't been in New York very long and was still establishing aikido. When my friend and I arrived at the dojo, Koichi Tohei Sensei was visiting from Japan, so the level of aikido we saw was as good as it gets. My friend was really blown away by what he saw and wanted to study aikido, but he lived in Baltimore and couldn't make it to class regularly, so he asked me to train and then teach him when we got together, and that's how I started in aikido. It wasn't a difficult decision for me, because I was also mesmerised by the movement. Although I had stopped boxing before that time, I had seen a little karate, but it never appealed to me; when I saw the freedom of movement in aikido and the spontaneity of the interactions on the mat, I knew I wanted to practise."

With two of the senior aikido teachers in the world outside of Japan teaching in the New York dojo, Konigsberg simply could not get enough of it. "I knew how to fight already, so I had confidence; but somehow I could never get the better of my teachers. I would attack and they would move, and the next thing I knew, I was dropping to the floor. I often received a 'tap' on the head as I went, and that only made me try harder, but no matter how hard I tried, I still got tapped on the head. One day I was training with Tohei Sensei, and as usual I was getting nowhere; he was



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He is the **founder and CEO of the Compass Institute** – a registered Charity, providing educational programmes to people with disabilities throughout six centres in Australia. **www.compassinc.org.au** 



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# "AIKIDO IS BASED ON THE IDEA OF DEVELOPING HARMONY

rather than conflict in whatever you are doing, and even when you engage with someone in the dojo, it's not just about using their energy against them."

doing some stuff but I couldn't see what was happening. I remember jumping up from the floor one time and saying, 'Wait a minute sensei, I wasn't ready'; he just looked at me and said, 'Are you ready now?' I never forgot that day because that's when I really understood that there was something else happening here, and that aikido was more than it appears to be."

His curiosity captured, Konigsberg has continued to pursue aikido for over 50 years. "Aikido grabbed me early and the grip is still on. Even after all this time, I'm fascinated by it, and have no problem reminding myself that I'm always going to be a beginner, even after 50 years. Actually, I think I'm more captivated by aikido now than ever. It's interesting, because not every activity will do that; art will, the creative process will."

I was curious to discover the extent to which one art form had influenced the other. Konigsberg smiled because he had obviously been asked about this many times before. "You know, I get asked about that a lot, people want to know if my art has been influenced by aikido, or the other way around. I know they have, but at the time you're living your life, you're occupied with many other things; so the influence is there but I can't define when or how."

I mentioned that in previous conversations I've had with Tony Smibert, he has shared a similar perception of the relationship between the two activities. Konigsberg's eyes sparkled a little brighter. "I want to tell you something," he said, "For years Sugano Sensei would talk to me about his friend and student in Tasmania who was also an artist. He told me he was a watercolourist whose work is well respected and widely collected, but I had never heard of him... When I did have the opportunity to meet Tony, and later, to see his work, I was completely blown away by it. As well as a master of aikido, Tony is a master of his art too. It was interesting

also to find that as well as a common love of aikido, our art has been heavily influenced by the same British artist:
[JWM] Turner. I remember wanting to get the same kind of energy into my work as I saw in Turner's, and I could see that Tony had been able to do just that."

There is clearly no sense of a separation between Konigsberg's art and his aikido; for him, the essence of each can be felt in the other. As he paraphrased his experience of being alive a number of times during our conversation, "You're in the water, right; you're immersed in your life," still, I wondered if he had ever pondered a life without aikido. Had he not been tipped off by his friend, and not walked the few blocks from his studio to the New York Aiki Kai dojo to watch a class, what then?

In his easygoing way that reflected a certain satisfaction with life, Konigsberg said, "I have sometimes thought about this. I imagine if I had only pursued art, but then,

I wouldn't have experienced the same love that I have, or the same kind of clean living; I wouldn't have understood the sense of mutual respect for others that I understand now. These things, more than the techniques of aikido, would have been missed and my life would have been less because of that. Far from the doio being a place where you immerse vourself in conflict, I believe you step on to the tatami to heal yourself, to restore a sense of balance, and to recover from the negative feelings you may have toward others or certain situations in your life; in this way, aikido is a truly wonderful thing."

One week later, as I'm driving to the foothills of the Western Tiers in Northern Tasmania to meet with Smibert, I'm listening to jazz on the radio and wondering what direction our conversation will take. The Tenchi dojo is nestled in a heavily wooded hillside with views along the Meander Valley; the location is breathtaking but I'm there to discuss Smibert's thoughts: what follows is, in part, what he shared with me.

"My pursuit of art and the martial arts began around the same time. I had been studying to become an artist, but I felt I didn't have what it took to be one; so, my love of art led me to become a school teacher instead, and in that way, maintain my connection to art by teaching it in school. At the same time, I had become interested in the martial arts, and trained in both judo and karate. My judo teacher, Arthur Moorshead Sensei, was instrumental in bringing Sugano Sensei to Melbourne and so I began to train in aikido too. I knew from my first meeting with Sugano Sensei that this was a person I could follow, and so I stopped training in karate and judo and put all my efforts into trying to understand aikido.

"Although aikido with Sensei opened my mind to a lot of things, which, up to that point, had never occurred to me, it wasn't until I saw a demonstration of watercolour painting in the late '70s that the connection between art and the martial arts became clear. As I watched the artist, I was immediately taken by the way he used the water to make the

art. He didn't try to control it, but instead displayed a level of harmony with the liquid that I recognised straight away as the same thing I was searching for in aikido. So I took up watercolour painting in order to better myself as a person, not to paint pictures. By this time I had been practising

aikido for around 15 years and I had come to appreciate that as an art it could not be understood through the physical techniques alone; aikido is a holistic education that develops the whole person. And the people who most inspired me to see that aikido and painting might be a



Above: 'Winter Landscape', an acrylic abstract on canvas by Tony Smibert Below: 'Tenshi', an oil painting on canvas by Harvey Konigsberg Opposite page: Smibert demonstrating at Federation Square, Melbourne, for Aiki Kai's 50th anniversary in January 2015



pathway were Sugano Shihan and another artist I really admired, Andre Sollier. He was a *kyudoka* (archer), karateka and sumi painter who inspired a wide circle of artists and others from my generation.

Smibert took his newfound appreciation for aikido and life, and with it began to create an alternative future. He looked again at the idea of becoming a full-time artist, and over the following five years worked to establish the life he wanted to live. Relocating to Northern Tasmania a little over 30 years ago, Smibert raised a family, established himself as a worldrenowned watercolourist, continued his studies with Sugano Shihan and deepened his understanding of aikido. Today, as one of only a handful of Aiki Kai 7th Dan shihan outside of Japan, Smibert continues to follow the parallel paths of the brush and subduing hostility. In Japanese, it's a concept known as bun bu ryo do, and has for centuries pointed to the overall cultivation of the character.

Although not unique to budo, the harmonious relationship between culture and conflict has long been considered important in the development of human nature. Samurai studied not only in the ways of war, but studied poetry and the tea ceremony too. The knights of Medieval Europe adhered to the code of 'chivalry', through which they came to recognise a balance between morality and the application of brutality. And even as far back as the fourth century BC, philosophers like Socrates, the founder of Western philosophy, were battle-hardened warriors as well as profound thinkers.

"For me, the connection between my art and my martial art are a little like having two pieces of software on a computer that can do the same thing, and can be defined in a number of different ways. Firstly, there are some technical similarities in executing a technique in the dojo and addressing the canvas in the studio. There are also some intellectual similarities, too; and finally, there is, to my mind, a definite spiritual connection between the two. This, of course, is nothing new; in Japan there are many historic examples of men who found symmetry between their art and their martial art. Musashi Miyamoto, the famous swordsman, was also a highly accomplished artist, author and calligrapher.

"Aikido is based on the idea of developing harmony rather than conflict in whatever you are doing, and even when you engage with someone in the dojo, it's not just about using their energy against them; you are trying to deal with them in a harmonious way, not just throw them around. Aikido looks for good outcomes for everyone involved. If I compare that with how people who are new to aikido often approach their training, I'm reminded of the way people often approach painting with watercolour. I see the struggle they have trying to make the paint go where they want it, they fight with it, and become frustrated that they can't gain control over it. It's not until they accept that the paint, which is nothing more than coloured mud suspended in water, will behave according to its nature, and as an artist, they have to learn to go with that idea rather than fight against it.

"Aikido has a lot in common with this idea, and students find they have difficulty with their aikido until they learn to stop imposing on aikido their own ideas of what they think it is. For me, understanding the relationship between *ten*, *chi*, *jin* [heaven, earth and man], has been an important step toward understanding aikido.

"Working with nature as opposed to against it, whether the activity in question is art or aikido, is not simply a matter of yielding to it; there are a number of things happening at different levels which enable you to act in harmony. The first is 'what you see': the appropriate equipment for the painting you wish to do, or the right technique for the outcome you want to achieve. The second is 'what you don't see': in other words, your



understanding of what you're doing and the capacity that gives you to pull everything together to create something. And the third level, what the founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, used to call the 'divine', is the purpose: what does your contact with aikido (or art) bring to your life?

"In the case of a piece of art, you might reflect on the medium, whether it was watercolour on paper or acrylic on canvas — this is what you see. If you are sufficiently insightful, you may then

go on to notice the style of the artist, the kind of brush strokes common to their work, the light they create and the colours they use, etc. This is what people don't always see. Finally, on a deeper level, you may be able to fathom an idea of what the artist had in mind when they were producing the painting; you may be able to glimpse their 'purpose'. In truth, I don't think this kind of thinking is unique to aikido, but a common thread or line of thought that is found in every authentic martial art."

As always, I parted company with Smibert that day better educated. His aikido fits him like a favourite old sweater; his art is worn in similar fashion. He and his contemporary from New York, Harvey Konigsberg, have walked parallel paths for half a century, and in doing so have produced a third: a way of harmony. From their example it becomes clear that concepts such as bun bu ryo do, the way of culture and warfare together, are more than mere esoteric notions.





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Established in 1965, Aiki Kai Australia is the original and largest Aikido organisation in Australia. As a member of the International Aikido Federation and Hombu grading authority for the last 50 years it offers

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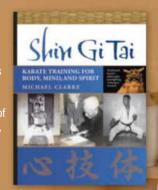




Master the traditional tools of Okinawan HOJO UNDO (supplementary training) to develop devastating power in your karate techniques. This book, by karate writer & 7th Dan Kyoshi Mike Clarke, shows how to reach the profound strength levels displayed by Okinawa's masters. Featuring accurate mechanical drawings, Clarke's book shows in comprehensive detail how to construct and use many training tools. It also reveals the history behind the development of hojo undo in 'old' Okinawa.

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ighting in the street is always unpredictable and throws up many variables. These elements of uncertainty add to the danger, so cutting down the time it takes to defend yourself is imperative. To be practically applied in a street fight, then, a martial art must give its practitioners the power and techniques necessary to end a fight quickly. The attackers will almost always be bigger or stronger, or they will outnumber you and could possibly be carrying weapons, so your survival will rely on finishing the job and getting out of there. Getting a head start will help you acheive this goal, so reaction time and awareness are also very important.

Wing Chun offers various ways to effectively bring down a bigger opponent, but to be able to 'finish' them or at least stop the attack before we suffer too much damage, we must look at the tools we have available and see if they are powerful enough to finish the fight. The elbow is one of the strongest tools for fighting in close and can be used to deliver massive impact in a tight space, and also to lacerate skin — a deep cut to the skin on the face or head can amount to fight-ending damage. I had a personal experience of this while training in muay Thai in Thailand, when I landed a back elbow on a trainer's lower jaw - to my surprise, it resulted in 23 stitches for him. (I paid for all the hospital expenses, and it left me with a lasting lesson of just how dangerous an elbow strike can be!)

Muay Thai, muay Boran and similar martial arts from the Southeast Asian region are famous for their elbows, which are strong and work very well with their combinations of punches, kicks and knees. The key is, they train themselves to be fitter, faster and more powerful than the opponent.

Although perhaps not across the world, in Southern Chinese kung fu circles, Wing Chun is also well known for its elbows - especially utilising elbow strikes while incorporating both hand-grabbing and trapping. The methods of delivery and set-up are quite different to those of muay Thai or even Northern Chinese kung fu styles. As a self-defence system created for the purpose of defending against people who are likely stronger and/or faster than you, Wing Chun seeks to save a 'beat' of time by deflecting and striking at once, shortening reaction time and therefore increasing the speed of response without physically being faster than the opponent. Traditionally speaking, the people of southern China are usually smaller than people from the northern parts of China, hence the styles developed through southern regions focus more on upper-body (close-range) strikes. Southern kung fu styles also focus on short moves, stable stances and short-distance power. Skilful and deceptive elbow strikes give smaller fighters the ability to knock out bigger opponents in a fast, effective way.

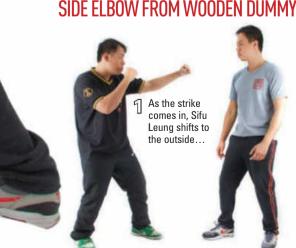
Most people know Wing Chun from its punches, as shown in the *Ip Man* movies, for example; however, the elbow strike is a vital tool in the Wing Chun arsenal (albeit one that a lot of practitioners neglect in training).

In Practical Wing Chun, there are only three empty-hand forms: Siu Lim Tau, Chum Kiu and Biu Jee. Siu Lim Tau develops fundamental techniques for close-quarter combat, and Chum Kiu incorporates knees and kicks for fighting at a greater distance, whereas Biu Jee trains a lot of elbow strikes and techniques for sudden closure of the distance or vice versa, extending the fighting range. In other words, to

make space when we are trapped in a disadvantaged position or to shut down your opponent's space and close the gap when you need to, using attacks as defence and regaining the structure and centrelines in an emergency situation.

However, it is a misconception that Wing Chun only uses elbows in the third empty-hand form, Biu Jee. There is a Wing Chun proverb, 'Biu Jee does not leave the door', meaning it is an advanced form and only taught to senior students. Biu Jee is full of elbows and, due to the proverbs, it gives the illusion that the elbow is only used in advanced forms. However, those who pay attention to details of the three empty-hand forms will know that there are back (reverse) elbows in each one.

In Practical Wing Chun, we have principles to follow but there are no set techniques. The flow is more important than memorising the steps. Practitioners learn the system through empty-handed forms, which resemble a dictionary. We learn it like we learn a new language: we learn the basic alphabet first and then we can put different letters into different words, then go from that into sentences. As shown below in the example of a mid-level elbow strike, the technique (taken from the wooden dummy form) sees the defender start with a left step and left middle elbow strike, to finish with a right overhead elbow strike. Once the technique is understood, though, you could combine the elbows in a different sequence/order to suit the circumstances — for example, striking with an overhead elbow first and finishing with a middle section elbow, stepping with either foot. Understanding the flow and being able to use these techniques while interchanging is the key to making the best use of elbow strikes or any other technique.







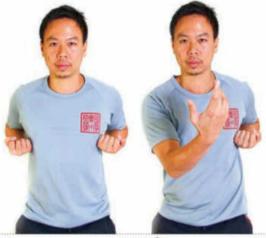
...and drops in deep with an elbow to the ribs while pulling the attacker onto it.

### **ELBOWS IN SIU LIMTAU FORM**

Just like the other two empty-hand forms, Siu Lim Tau finishes a punch and also various other techniques with a back (reverse) elbow.

The photo shows part of the form where a back elbow is followed by a single crossing hand (for illustration purposes, the crossing hand is demonstrated with a single hand).

This back elbow technique is the same finishing movement across all three emptyhand forms.



IN PRACTICAL WING CHUN, THERE ARE ONLY THREE EMPTY-HAND FORMS: SIU LIM TAU, CHUM KIU AND BIU JEE.



- 1. As the attacker attempts to grab Sifu Leung from behind in a bear-hug...
- 2....Leung immediately raises his left elbow and drops his weight (thus raising the attacker's arms up to free his own movement)...
- 3....driving a reverse elbow strike into the attacker while simultaneously capturing his arm with a *larp sau* (grabbing hand)...
- 4.... and shifting his body to deliver a *hoi sau* (forearm strike) to the attacker's neck.



### **ELBOWS IN CHUM KIU FORM**

The first section of the second empty-hand form, Chum Kiu, comes with a shifting elbow strike, *chum jarn* (sinking elbow). As the name explains, the power of this movement comes from sinking the elbow from a horizontal plane, shifting the body to angle towards the side. The power

is focused on the elbow, not the forearm. This technique can be used as a deflection to a straight punch or the elbow can be used to attack.

The photos demonstrate a chum jarn technique — start facing the front to finish roughly facing 45 degrees to the side.



As the attacker advances, Sifu Leung protects his centre and angles toward the outside of the power (rear) hand.



As the attacker takes a full step and strikes, Leung steps (while angling out) with a pak tang da (parry and palm strike) to the face...



...driving the attacker's head back as Leung steps in and places his right foot behind the attacker's leg.



Leung then brings his left hand over in preparation for a *chum jarn* (sinking elbow)...



...and follows through, dropping his weight down into an elbow to the neck.



 As the attacker advances, Sifu Leung guards his centre, knees relaxed for balance.

2. As the attacker fires his rear hand, Leung shifts left and parries, simultaneously threading his left hand underneath (*chuen sau*)...

- 3. ...to strike and position himself with fun sau (separating hands) to seize his foe's head...
- 4. ...and snap down the opponent's head, exposing his back...
- 5. ...to a sinking elbow through the shoulder blades.

There are two types of chum jarn in the form Chum Kiu. The first, shown here, is where the elbow sinks to the side platform. In the second section of the Chum Kiu form, we find *jone shin* chum jarn (centreline sinking elbow). Now, this time the elbow's sinking direction goes vertically along the first centreline (the line dividing the body vertically through its centre).

The above photos demonstrate the centreline sinking elbow technique. There must be no tension in the wrist; that way, one can change the technique straight after the elbow strike using a movement from the wrist.

## ELBOWS IN BIU JEE FORM

The Biu Jee form, the third in the Wing Chun system, is famous for its elbows. However, Wing Chun kung fu uses its elbows in a different way to a lot of other combat systems. The elbow used in Biu Jee form is usually combined with grabbing or trapping techniques. By pulling the opponent into your elbow, it increases the power of an elbow strike tremendously.

There are three elbow strikes in the form of Biu Jee (excluding back elbow, which we have already covered). These elbow strikes consist of low elbow, middle elbow and high overhead elbow strikes.





# 1. CUP JARN (OVERHEAD ELBOW)

The key point of this elbow strike is making sure the shoulder is relaxed and that you strike on a diagonal, cutting through the centreline. The opposite hand to the elbow serves as a protector, grabbing any punch or strike that may be coming in towards your centreline 1. An aggressor suddenly launches forward into Sifu Leung's space...

 but as he bridges with a jabbing lead, Leung blocks it with a left crossing hand as he moves outside...

3. ...drawing the arm and

attacker forward into Leung's counter elbow to the jaw.

4. Following through with its momentum, Leung's elbow is rechambered...

5. ...to return as a reverse elbow strike to the attacker's face.











# 2. WAN JARN (MIDDLE SECTION ELBOW)

This elbow strike travels horizontally from one side of the body to the other with a Biu Jee thrusting hand (finger strike) underneath the elbow. The key point is similar to others: keep the elbow relaxed to help increase the power and speed. The hand underneath the elbow helps by protecting the centreline and can be used to remove any obstacles while simultaneously performing an elbow strike (see photo 3 in the example below).



# 11

- Sifu Leung
   assumes his guard
   as the attacker
   advances
- 2. ...and fires a lead jab; Leung steps and parries while raising his forward elbow...
- 3....to fire wan jarn (middle section/ horizontal elbow) at the attacker's head. This also covers the line of a possible second punch while Leung's right hand maintains contact with his foe's left arm.
- 4. Bringing his elbow back, Leung collects and controls his attacker's head and drives back off the rear foot...
- 5. ...to finish with *cup jarn* (upper/overhead elbow strike), sinking his weight into it.



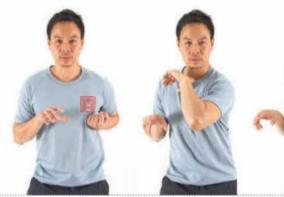




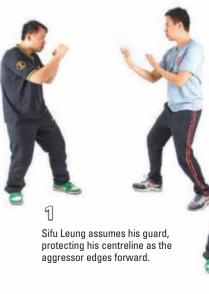


# 3. DAI JARN (LOW ELBOW)

This elbow strike is great for using against an attacker who is taller or larger. The key point of this elbow strike is to keep the elbow as close to the body as possible; swing your elbow through from a relaxed position across your centreline to as high a point as is physically realistic. The targets can include the lower section of the rib cage (false ribs), solar plexus and the lower section of the head (the chin/jaw) area. It can also be used as an elbow lock, as shown in the example below.



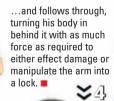




As the punch comes in, Leung redirects it with his leading hand into his rear (left) hand...



...and draws it in as he simultaneously fires a lower elbow strike into the back of the attacker's elbow joint...







THE KEYS TO IP MAN'S KUNG FU

BY GRANDMASTER SAMUEL KWOK



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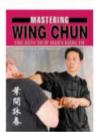
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### **CHUM KIU (SEEKING THE BRIDGE)**

Chum Kiu, Wing Chun's second form, teaches the dynamic application of the techniques learned in Siu Lim Tao. Chum Kiu teaches you how to close the gap and use both hands to defend and attack simultaneously. Chum Kiu teaches stepping and footwork, and also Wing Chun's specialised kicking method and the generation of power by using the entire body in stance-turning (yiu-ma). In this DVD, Grandmaster Kwok also demonstrates and explains in detail Wing Chun's devastating short-range power.

### **BIU GEE (THRUSTING-FINGERS)**

Biu Gee (Thrusting Fingers) form, the last hand form taught in the Wing Chun system, is key to learning to focus energy into a strike and also develops devastating power by combining focused strikes with the rotational energy of correct stance-turning. It also trains the hands to regain the centre if the centreline is lost or unguarded. The Biu-Gee form teaches two unique methods of footwork, the use of 'two-direction energy' and how to control the opponent and effectively use continuous strikes.

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# **TECHNIQUE WORKSHOP** WITH PETE KEOGH





# Defence against a grab and punch:

# Okinawan Goju Ryu Karate

## PETE KEOGH

Pete Keogh has been involved in karate since 1986 and, as the founder of TriTactics, he has developed and delivered successful martial arts, self-defence and anger-management programs to a several public and private schools. Keogh is currently engaged by several youth organisations to work with disengaged youth and also runs women's self-defence programs in workplaces and for the general public.

Keogh has developed a real passion for the teachings of Okinawa's Masaji Taira Sensei and the Okinawan Goju Ryu Kenkyukai, travelling to training sessions in Australia, Okinawa, the US and New Zealand. As the OGRK's Australian shibucho (branch chief), he is now passing on all he has learned from Taira Sensei to more than 150 students.

# Q&A Pete, what are the core principles of the martial art you teach?

My instructor Taira Masaji Sensei's main principle focuses on the bunkai [combative applications] of the Goju Ryu kata. He has painstakingly dissected the kata and trained his body to the point where he has mastered the inner workings of Goiu Ryu kata. Taira Sensei's bunkai is unusual in his insistence on working the kata in sequence, rather than picking techniques from the kata in isolation. He is also adamant that the kata should not be changed to perform bunkai. In saying this, we cannot forget kihon [basics or fundamentals]. Without kihon — posture, form, stance, focus and breathing — and kihon kata, we don't even get near bunkai.

It is important not to mistake Taira
Sensei's complete kata bunkai to mean that
the entire kata needs to be performed — any
single technique can be used to stop an
attack. Rather, the kata works as a template
to prepare the student with entry and exit
points for defensive and counter moves.
With a complete knowledge of the system,
a practitioner should be able to respond to
almost any attack and have a start and end
point from it. The defence shown here uses
principles from the kata Seiyunchin.



As the aggressor moves to grab his lapel, Sensei Keogh is already moving his guarding hand to control it...



...and before
the attacker can
unload a strike,
Keogh pre-empts
it by stabbing
two fingers into
the suprasternal/
jugular notch, to
cause shock and
disrupt breathing.



The attacker tries to fight back, taking a swing, which Keogh intercepts with a high forearm block...



...shifting back slightly out of the punch's arc and letting its force pass, seizing the arm with his other hand...



...and counter-striking through the opening as he clears the arm. In this instance the attacker covers...



...and rather than resist the forward energy, Keogh redirects his foe's blocking arm up with his rear hand while dropping his lead elbow into the other arm.



The attacker's response is to try to lift the trapped arm, assisting Keogh's use of the opening created to deliver an uppercut.



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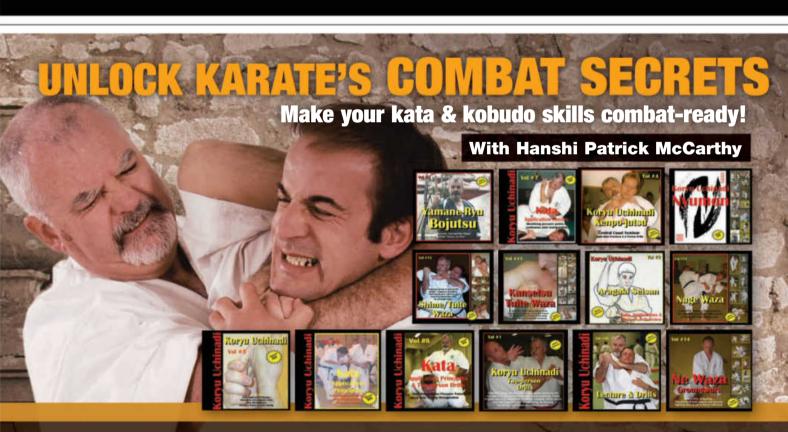
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# TECHNIQUE WORKSHOP WITH KYL REBER



# Defence against a grab and punch:

# **BJMA freestyle & BJJ**

# **KYL REBER**

Kyl Reber has been teaching for 18 years and runs his full-time centre Chikara Martial Arts in Brisbane, Queensland. After starting his martial arts training in tackwondo in country Queensland as a teenager, Reber moved to Brisbane for university. There, through a family friend, he found Zen Do Kai and now long-time coach Brad Ross, and has never looked back. Reber began working in security not long after moving to Brisbane and stayed in the industry while training and teaching for 19 years. He ran security teams at some of Brisbane's busiest nightclubs and spent most of his time working and assisting in the operations of large music festivals, concerts and sporting events across south-east Queensland.

Having been involved with Bob Jones Martial Arts for 21 years now, Reber holds the rank of 6th Degree in Zen Do Kai, 5th Degree in BJC muay Thai, and is also a BJJ Black-belt under Peter de Been.

# Q&A Kyl, how has your martial arts training changed you?

That's a good one. It's basically given me a life. It shaped me into who I am. I have so much to thank martial arts for. I have friends that I know will be there for my family through thick and thin (which has been proven). It also led to me working in a vocation for nearly 20 years that opened up my eyes to the world, and I met some very cool people along the way.

Martial arts taught me to stick with things and persevere. When I started training as a teenager, I just wanted to learn how to fight — plain and simple — but now that I can, my passion is to keep training and to teach. I love seeing the transformation in students, to see them evolve in all parts of their life.

Most importantly, it gave me a family. I met my wife studying martial arts and now I have two beautiful daughters who also train and I see in them the passion that was (and still is) in me. With their support, I now get to do this beautiful thing as a full-time job — "If you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life."



As the attacker approaches Reber and grabs for his neck with his other hand cocked, Reber assumes a non-violent stance with hands open...



...then, preempting the launch of the cocked fist, Reber drops his weight forward into a knifehand strike to the attacker's elbow joint and an upward palm-heel strike to the chin...



...and maintains contact with the face, using a hand on the chin and his other hand on the elbow to spin the attacker away.



With the attacker's body now torqued and his structure broken, Reber controls his foe's chin and underhooks his right shoulder to set up a takedown...



...maintaining control of the attacker's right arm as Reber drops into a knee-ride and grabs a handful of his opponent's hoodie ready to set up the choke.



Keeping pressure on the attacker's ribs, Reber pulls the hoodie up and in tight and uses his other hand to subdue the attacker with a cross-lapel choke.



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# Shiryodo Karate

## **MALCOLM AYLES**

Sensei Malcolm Ayles, 4th Degree Black-belt, is the head instructor of Shirvodo Karate in Geelong. He has been training for more than 25 years and has been a full-time martial arts instructor for over 10 years. Ayles began his training under Shihan Mervyn Nelis in Seido karate, then after Shihan Nelis left the Seido organisation, Ayles opened his own dojo under the Seido organisation until around five years ago, when he left to establish the Shiryodo system. Ayles also spent six years training under Tom Sotis in the AMOK! knife combat system. Shiryodo karate has also been heavily influenced by Ayles' training with Hanshi Patrick McCarthy.

A nationally recognised martial artist, Ayles has won numerous titles in the National All Styles and other martial arts tournaments, and is the current Victorian technical director for the National All Styles organisation.

Ayles has also founded Climate Warrior, a non-profit group whose goal is to get the martial arts community more involved with the issue of climate change.

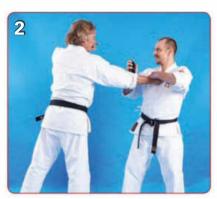
# Malcolm, in your opinion and experience, what are the most important elements of self-defence?

For me, the most important thing is that people are able to functionally apply the knowledge they have. It needs to be effective but, importantly, it needs to also have been practised enough and in a way that makes it able to be used in a real-life situation. Sometimes people learn a lot of complex techniques that are difficult to make functional, which can be fun and challenging; however, in an actual self-defence scenario, they will not be able to effectively perform these [due to the effect of adrenaline on motor skills, etc.].

I also include a reasonable amount of training focused on improvised weapons. In a self-defence situation, being confident in the use of common items to defend yourself will give you a significant advantage.



In this scenario, Sensei Ayles is talking on his mobile phone when an aggressor comes toward him, demanding the phone.



As the aggressor grabs at him, Ayles is already responding, slamming the base of his phone into the nerves inside the forearm while controlling the grabbing hand...



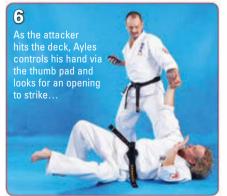
...and shifting away from the attacker's closest weapon as he again use his phone to intercept the blow.



Ayles follows immediately with a strike to the face, stepping through with it as he turns out the attacker's grabbing hand...



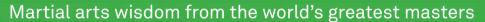
...twisting it violently and following through to take the offender down.







# From the Masters to You!

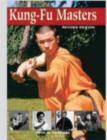




# THE MASTERS SPEAK (Revised Edition)

By Jose M. Fraguas

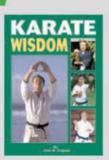
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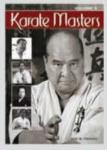
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or more & SAVE up to

# **KARATE MASTERS**

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Rare & exclusive interviews with 23 legendary masters, including Gogen Yamaguchi, Teruo Chinen, Jiro Ohtsuka, Shojiro Koyama and many more. Contains fascinating personal details, inspiring stories and deep philosophies.



# TECHNIQUE WORKSHOP WITH MICHAEL MATLIJOVSKI



# **Defence against a grab and punch:**

# Hapkido & MMA

## MICHAEL MATLIJOVSKI

Michael Matlijovski, 3rd Degree Black-belt in hapkido, taekwondo and kyusho-jitsu (pressure-point combat), is the founder and chief instructor of KMA Champion Martial Arts™ Shellharbour under Master Fari Salievski. With more than 20 years' experience in the martial arts, Matlijovski holds multiple Black-belts and certifications in a variety of systems including Ray Floro's Floro Fighting Systems (Level 2 Instructor), Integrated Combat Systems (ICS) under Peter Sciarra, and knife/impact weapon combatives (Basic Instructor) under William 'Hock' Hochheim. He is also a Brown-belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Matlijovski was a 2014 inductee into The World Martial Arts Hall of Fame (via the World Martial Arts Alliance Australia) and regularly travels to train with martial arts legends, fighters and masters from all over the world in order to "bring back new and improved techniques to refine the systems we teach at KMA Champion Martial Arts Shellharbour".

# O&A Michael, what are the core principles of the martial arts you teach?

My aim is to teach correct understanding and execution of life-saving self-defence techniques through proper training and practice of core principles and fundamentals. These principles are paramount in the teaching and understanding of our self-defence techniques and training:

**Body mechanics** – Understanding the human body and how it operates in terms of leverage, weight, circular motion, balance, sourcing power, etc.

Footwork and balance – Understanding how to disrupt an attacker's balance, to defuse the attacker's weapons so you come out on top in the dominant position.

Flowing in your techniques — Not stopping in your execution but blending with an opponent's force, using their force against them, creating momentum where required and knowing how to use it to your advantage.

**Working with resistance** – Learning what to do if the opponent does not cooperate, is much taller or stronger, etc. by using pressure points, distractions and other tactics.

**Finishing the fight** – Understanding to how properly finish off the technique and get to safety.

**Training for different scenarios** – Exploring various attack scenarios and covering diverse situations — punches, kicks, edged weapons, etc.

By following the above, my students should be able to confidently execute any technique they train in with good understanding and be able to adapt their techniques to different scenarios and environments.



As the attacker grabs Matlijovski by the neck and launches his rear fist, Matlijovski traps the grabbing hand as he shifts inside the punch and deflects it with his forearm.

...and kicks out

the top of his

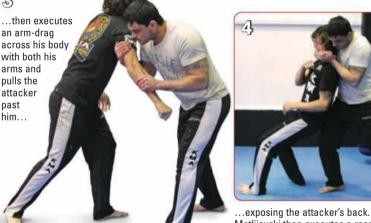
down.

attacker's calf/

knee to bring him



Having made contact, Matlijovski traps the attacker's right arm with his left hand and palm-strikes the attacker to distract him...



...exposing the attacker's back.
Matlijovski then executes a rear choke
in a Gable grip, using the cutting edge
of his inner forearm...



Matiljovski then controls his attacker with a lockdown and choke, releasing it once the opponent is subdued.

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W W W . K M A S H E L L H A R B O U R . C O M





s a fighter and an athlete, you understand the importance of protecting and preserving one of your primary assets — the structure and function of your feet.

But how well do you know your feet? You know when they hurt, as they contain more nerves than anywhere else in the body, but do you know how they work and how we damage them?

As a highly complex mechanical system upon which you rely to be able to kick, move, skip, walk, run and get around, each foot consists of 26 bones (a guarter of all the bones in the body), 33 joints, 107 ligaments, 19 muscles and tendons, an intricate network of muscles, nerves and blood vessels, plus 250,000 sweat glands that produce approximately 500 ml of perspiration daily. Your feet will not be the same shape; one will be larger than the other (greater than 50 per cent of the population has a larger left foot), and one will move differently than the other. Your feet are capable of an enormous array of movements while absorbing cumulative weight-bearing forces of hundreds of tonnes each day.

You'll be taking in excess of 10,000-to-15,000 steps per day, with each step generating between 1.5 and three times your bodyweight. That equates to walking over 128,000 km in your lifetime — more than three times around the earth.

The intricate structure of the human foot was described by Leonardo da Vinci as, "a masterpiece of engineering and a work of art." However, as the only pair of feet you will ever own, they need to last

you a lifetime. A better understanding of what your feet need to tolerate, and how martial arts damage them, will help you keep your feet kicking.

Genetics play a major role in the predisposition, or proneness your feet have to injury. The shape of your joints, the attachment of the ligaments and tendons, the structure of your legs, knees, hips pelvis and spine all influence the way your feet function. While you cannot change your structure, you can, with a little knowledge and foresight, care for your feet and ankles to minimise time lost to injury and maximise their performance.

# WHAT CAUSES COMMON TYPES OF FIGHTING INJURIES?

Foot and ankle injuries are a normal part of martial arts. Blunt force trauma and sprains are the two basic categories of martial arts injuries that occur in the foot and ankle. Blunt force trauma injury is a direct result of the foot hitting another solid object. The object could be the heavy bag, a target mitt or your opponent. Misjudging the opponent's intended next move or improper technique can result in blunt force trauma. As a result, you may suffer a contusion, a laceration or a fracture to your foot or ankle.

Like any type of injury, foot and ankle problems in fighting can be classified in different ways. Kickboxing emphasizes rapid foot strikes and ballistic full contact, which can result in contusions (bruises) and lacerations of the skin, ligament sprains, tendon and muscle strains and bone or joint fractures.

Research into the rate and type of injuries occurring to registered professional kickboxers in Australia, using data describing all fight outcomes and injuries sustained during competition, shows a total of 382 injuries recorded from 3481 fight participations, at an injury rate of 109.7 injuries per 1000 fight participations. The most common body region injured was the head/ neck/face (52.5 per cent), followed by the lower extremities (39.8 per cent). Specifically, injuries to the lower leg (23.3) per cent), the face (19.4 per cent), and intracranial injury (17.2 per cent) were the most common. Over 64 per cent of the injuries were superficial bruising or lacerations. Foot and ankle account for at least 10 per cent of the total injuries sustained in the martial arts — and the figure is probably higher due to the lack of reporting of many digital injuries such as contusions, toenail trauma and uncomplicated fractures.

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

Some of the factors that can increase your risk of injury include:

- Choice of sport karate, taekwondo and kickboxing account for about half of all martial arts injuries in Victoria.
- **Poor technique** holding or moving the body incorrectly can put unnecessary strain on joints, muscles and ligaments. The surface you train and fight on can have an influence here.
- **Using excessive force** failing to pull a punch or kick can inflict injury on an opponent.

- Inexperience beginners are more likely to get hurt because their bodies are not used to the demands of the sport, but injuries are seen throughout the spectrum of expertise. Amateur participants are the most likely to sustain sprains and soft-tissue injuries. Among professional fighters, the main risks are fractures and life-threatening injuries to other parts of the body, namely the head.
- **Overtraining** training too much and too often can lead to a wide range of overuse injuries.

# **COMMON FOOT DAMAGE:**

# **Contusions / Bruises**

A bruise, or contusion, is caused when blood vessels are damaged or broken as the result of a blow to the skin. The raised area of a bump or bruise results from blood leaking from these injured blood vessels into the tissues as well as from the body's response to the injury. A purplish, flat bruise that occurs when blood leaks out into the top layers of skin is referred to as an ecchymosis.

Contusions, which are usually less severe than fractures, are a common result of sparring. Advancing opponents often cut short well-intentioned kicks, which land in an unintended area such as the elbow or shin.

Contusion injuries may have symptoms for up to six weeks although one can usually recommend an early return to martial arts activities. No objective criteria are available for deciding which fighters should be removed from the field of play and which may return to competition. In general,

individuals with injuries involving the larger muscle groups, such as the quadriceps or calf, have to stop for immediate attention and evaluation. Each case must be assessed on an individual basis. The first step is to ice the affected area and reassess function and swelling within a short period. You must always consider the potential for re-injury when deciding when to return to competition. Re-injury of an injured muscle is a major factor in developing further damage and also significantly increases the healing time.

### Tendon sheath trauma

Tendon sheath trauma on the top of the foot can be incredibly painful — the aforementioned kicking of an elbow is a common mechanism. The tendon straps running atop the foot bones are easily pinched, and can rapidly swell and make even walking difficult. 'Conditioning' this area (skin over tendons and tendon sheaths) is considered possible in some styles, but is more difficult to accomplish than conditioning the shin surfaces (skin over bone). Protective gear and carefully practising kick placement may be a more valuable in the long run: preventing the mechanism of injury can mean the avoidance of weeks of recuperation time.

No doubt you have experienced these types of injuries during your martial arts career.

Careful consideration of the importance of your feet and the many strategies you can employ to protect and preserve them will keep you training and fighting for many years to come.

# DR PETER LEWIS

Dr Lewis is internationally recognised as a medical authority in the martial arts field. He has consulted at ReCreation Medical Centre and Malvern Martial Arts Centre in Melbourne for 24 years, and has also been studying and teaching martial arts for 34 years. Best known as a ringside physician, Dr Lewis has worked in 28 cities internationally, 22 of these on world-title standard events, and has competed in karate, taekwondo and kung fu. Contact info@malvernhealthandfitness.com.au

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# **DRILL IT WITH BILLY MANNE**



# Let Go and Flow

This basic flowing blocking drill is a simple way to learn how to let force pass to better your position.

### **THE TRAINER**

Kyoshi Billy Manne operates Karma Dojos and runs Energym in Frankston, Victoria. One of Soke Bob Jones' original students and instructors in Zen Do Kai/ Bob Jones Martial Arts, Manne has worked full-time in the martial arts for over 30 years. A consummate student who trains daily, he has earned numerous high ranks including 8th Degree Black-belts in Zen Do Kai freestyle and muay Thai/ kickboxing, a Black-belt in BJJ and a 2nd Degree Blackbelt in Ki Fusio n aikido under Sensei Mal McRae, as well as instructor accreditations in Tactical krav maga (under Itay Gil), Russian Systema (from the Homo Ludens school in Serbia) and boxing. He is also a dedicated student of Muso Shinden-ryu iaido.

# **THE DRILL**

This blocking flow drill is pretty basic in its set-up but teaches some very applicable skills. To begin, start with your partner facing you in an aggressive stance; you maintain a balanced but subtle ready-stance, as you would when trying to defuse a confrontation but stay ready to intercept an attack.

When your partner strikes (with either hand, but for beginners, state which one), you deflect it up while shifting back and to the outside just enough to give you space to let the punch pass overhead. Simultaneously you thread your other guarding hand up from underneath to grab

Begin in a subtle readystance, one foot forward, but with hands in a 'passive' defensive position (as when defusing a potential fight).





When your partner strikes, shift back slightly and direct the punch up with the same-side



...while simultaneously shooting your other hand up from underneath to collect the striking arm and pass it over your head ...



... letting the force flow past as you continue moving to the outside. Control the opponent's arm here, ensuring your other hand is up.

Your partner immediately punches again from the other side and you meet it the same way, moving outside its arc...





...and threading your other hand underneath to direct it overhead as you move to the outside...

the arm — the idea being that you pass control of the punch from one hand to another, redirecting it away from you and using it to help you get to the safer 'blind side', away from the second strike.

You partner continues striking, one arm, then the other, and you repeat the process side-to-side several times before swapping. You can also play with controlling the arm to stop your opponent easily throwing the second punch, and might finish each set with follow-up strikes for which you've set up by taking the outside position. Once you've got the drill down, your partner can also start pressing forward with each punch, changing his angle more to follow you and free up his other arm, etc. — this adds to the 'aliveness' of the drill.

### THE RESULT

As the introduction states, this drill is a simple way to

I always teach for the worst-case scenario on the street and I train my students to be able to deal with things going wrong.

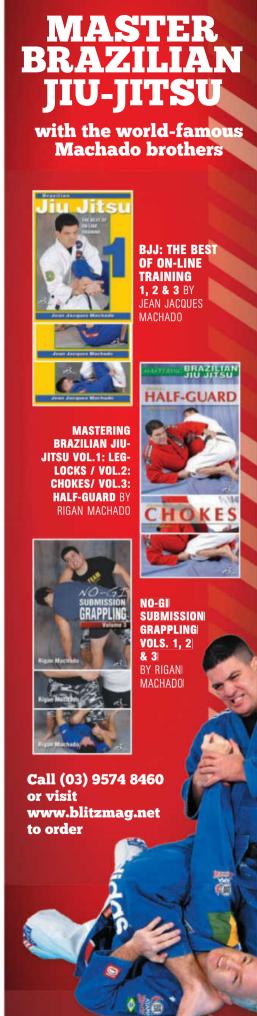
learn how to let force pass to better your position, while also working on reaction speed (depending on how advanced you are and thus how fast you do it). Most importantly, it teaches you how to position your body best to receive force but also how to let it go — regardless of whether you're in perfect position or a poor one (when it's most necessary to release force or become unbalanced).

Of course, in every drill and every technique, students should work on developing a 'martial arts mind' — in this case, that means an ability to adapt on the spot when a first technique does not get the desired result. In the case of this drill, this might mean going straight into

a suitable follow-up or recovery technique in the case that the hit catches you (or rather, you catch it) off centre and your balance becomes compromised.

I always teach for the worst-case scenario on the street and I train my students to be able to deal with things going wrong. This drill embodies the criteria of effective realitybased techniques, in that it is based around the most common of street attacks - particularly as used for initiating a fight, the 'sucker punch' — and also teaches vou to always be aware of, and move away from. the opponent's follow-up weapon. This in turn gives you opportunity to practise positioning yourself for effective follow-ups.





# THE BURN WITH MATT BEECROFT



# **One Side Fits All**

For strength and injury prevention, are we better off using exercises that train both sides of the body at once, or one side at a time?

et's face it: exercise can be dangerous. When we have around 40 or more per cent of people getting injured from training every year, we clearly have some issues with exercise prescription. Sometimes the stuff we do in the gym or, as instructors, assign to our students just doesn't work. The guestion is, why?

Exercise is a stimulus for the body. If you give the wrong technique or exercise to the wrong person, you stimulate the body to adapt in a way it shouldn't — and the result can be disastrous.

Enough strength training research has been done that we now understand that people respond differently to exercise. In one example, researchers found that after 16 weeks of training a bench press for three hours per week, 17 per cent significantly improved their numbers, 63 per cent had minimal but small improvements and 20 per cent actually went backwards. Go figure.

Last issue, I mentioned one of the biggest variables in progressively overloading the body apart from load, volume and density is exercise selection. You can now see how what may often seem as choice for choice's sake can actually have huge ramifications for your health and performance.

Let's look at bilateral training (exercising both sides of the body simultaneously) versus unilateral training (exercising one side at a time), purely from a performance perspective.

First, though, I want to make the point that I don't favour one form of training over the other.

Here are the advantages of bilateral exercises (such as back squats, bench press, etc):

- It is the best way to develop overall, absolute strength
- The absolute greatest amount of weight can be used, because the entire body is used, not just one leg
- There is less stress on balance and stabiliser muscles, again allowing more weight to be used
- Exercises such as the squat and deadlift are tried-andtrue methods that have created powerful athletes, huge bodybuilders and allaround strong people for years and years.

With unilateral exercises (such as the Bulgarian splitsquat), you are getting these advantages:

- The total load on the spine is reduced, because the weight is cut down roughly by half
- The split-stance used in unilateral exercises is more similar to the athletic stance. One foot pushes off the ground, and the other lands on the ground
- Technically, one can move more weight per leg compared to bilateral exercises
- Stabilising muscles are engaged to a greater degree.

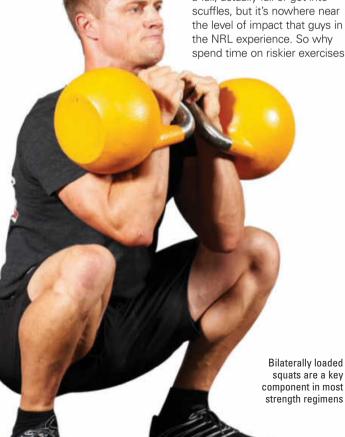
Obviously, both have their own benefits. It is certainly hard to choose one over the other. The debate as to what is 'better' has gone on for years, but to me this argument is irrelevant because it inevitably depends on the person for whom the exercise is being prescribed and the reason for it.

# THE ATHLETE'S NEEDS

While we know that bilateral exercises develop the entire body's strength more effectively, what needs to be determined is whether or not the athlete or client needs this absolute strength, and what is

the risk versus the benefit of doing a particular exercise.

If I'm a rugby league coach, my players will do heavy back squats. When you've got 150 kilograms on your back, you know that back strength is being developed. I see it as a higher risk and higher reward exercise (depending on the player's history and injuries) that these athletes do to maximise their toughness and ability to take a hit. But is all of this necessary for a limited-contact athlete, like a soccer player? No. Sure, the guvs plaving soccer might occasionally crash into each other, fake a fall, actually fall or get into scuffles, but it's nowhere near the level of impact that guys in the NRL experience. So why



ARLIE SURIAN

such as heavy back squats? I don't think they need as much back strength. Leg strength, which I'm sure is important for soccer players, can still be achieved with unilateral exercises.

This also applies to people who aren't athletes. Are you in a physically demanding job (e.g. military, fireman) that requires allaround toughness, or do you have a desk job that doesn't have physical requirements? Understanding your needs and demands will help you decide whether you need to do bilateral training for whole-body strength, or you can just give your spine a break and stick to unilateral training.

# UNILATERAL EXERCISE BENEFITS

For those with back injuries, the split-squat is an awesome progression to be used when trying to work one's way back up to the regular back squat, simply because the load on the spine is cut in half. Also, for those with seriouslydebilitating back injuries, they may only be able to do unilateral exercises for a long time (or forever). Sure, maximum wholebody strength is achieved bilaterally, but for those who are seriously damaged, unilateral movements are much better than nothing.

Stabilisation and balance are emphasised more during single-leg training, which is particularly useful in its own right for athletes and others. Balance is a skill of its own, and allowing stabilisers to become weak can result in various injuries. Important for a martial

artist? You bet.

Not everything we do in life is performed with both feet at the same time. Most natural movements running, tackling, crawling, climbing, etc. — involve one leg driving the body from a single-leg stance, while the other plants and follows up with driving the body, and so on. So, there seems to be an added importance for being able to do things unilaterally, one leg at a time. And if you are a martial artist kicking and kneeing while balanced on one leg, then you can see the importance of unilateral training.

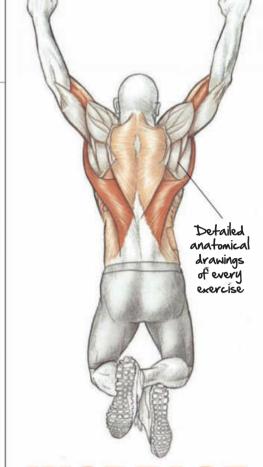
# THE MYTH OF SYMMETRY

We have been bombarded about symmetry and training for symmetry in the world of fitness since the beginning. Everything is about being 'balanced': do the same amount of sets or reps on both sides: do the same amount of stretching or mobility work on both sides; make sure you do unilateral exercises. Go to a class and you will have to do the same amount of work on both sides, all in the name of symmetry and balance. But the fact is, we were never born symmetrical in the first place — and, more so, most of us are dominant on one side of the body. So the argument of symmetry

is now a moot one, as working both sides of our body evenly would keep us, well...asymmetrical, wouldn't it?

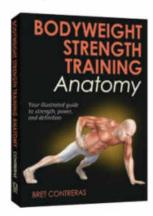
Outwardly, the human body appears symmetrical but inside our body our organs aren't aligned and placed symmetrically - a theory that the folk at the Postural Restoration Institute (www.posturalrestoration. com) push heavily in their training. We have a liver on our right and a spleen on our left. Our heart sits in our upper-left chest cavity and takes up so much room that to accommodate it, our left lung must be smaller than our right (two lobes

> Lunges are a great unilateral exercise, loaded or not

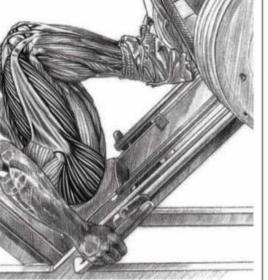


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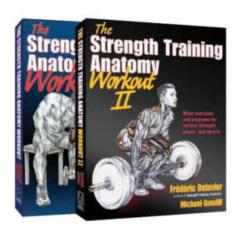
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# THE BURN WITH MATT REFCROET

versus three). Even the two halves of the diaphragm are different in size and strength. Pretty much all systems in our bodies visual, digestive, muscular, respiratory, lymphatic, and neurological — are asymmetrical. It's not a bad thing; although organised asymmetrically, the body's structures are still more or less distributed evenly. But that asymmetry does tend to make most of us shift our centre of gravity to our right leg. If you watch a woman holding an infant or watch people waiting in line and so on, you will notice this weight shift to the right leg. Watch someone walk or go upstairs — they will push off the right leg and if carrying a bag, they will usually put the bag on the right shoulder, for example. In standing, most will people put their weight on their right leg, move their left foot forward, rotate their pelvis down and right. drop the right shoulder, and raise the left side of the rib cage. We assume this stance partly due to gravity (to offset the weight of the heart), partly to support the function of the diaphragm's larger right leaflet, and partly because that leaflet's stronger attachments tug us in that direction. It also a consequence of being righthanded — even if you're a lefty, you shift right because nearly everything in society,

from doorknobs to cars,

Exercises such as the squat and deadlift are tried-and-true methods that have created powerful athletes,

people for years and years.

to computers to guitars, is ergonomically designed for right-handed people.

Eventually we get locked in that rightward posture. Repeatedly assuming this with all this right side dominance can cause havoc for our joints, as we are always out of alignment. Add an asymmetrical sport or martial art as well (i.e. where we favour an 'orthodox' or a 'southpaw' stance) and you can see where all this is going. The PRI recommend several things, from day-to-day posture and breathing through to exercise

prescription, to correct it. Through the Functional Movement Screen (FMS), we can see that the biggest predictor of injury is. firstly, previous injury and, secondly, asymmetry. So if this is the case, and we also know the body is asymmetrical by nature and often rightside dominant, why do we continue to

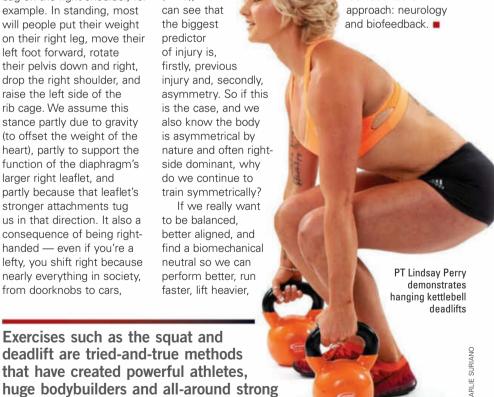
If we really want to be balanced. better aligned, and find a biomechanical neutral so we can perform better, run faster, lift heavier,

hit harder and so on, we need to start embracing the ideal that it is totally okay to train unevenly. If we want to avoid injury or treat a current concern, we may need to train asymmetrically. Does that mean we should do more stretchina on one side more than the other? Yes. Does that mean you might train one side with more sets and reps than the other? Yes. Does that mean possibly only stretching one side or only training one side of the body to even things out? Yes.

And you are probably freaking out about that. But don't: it could provide the key you've been missing in

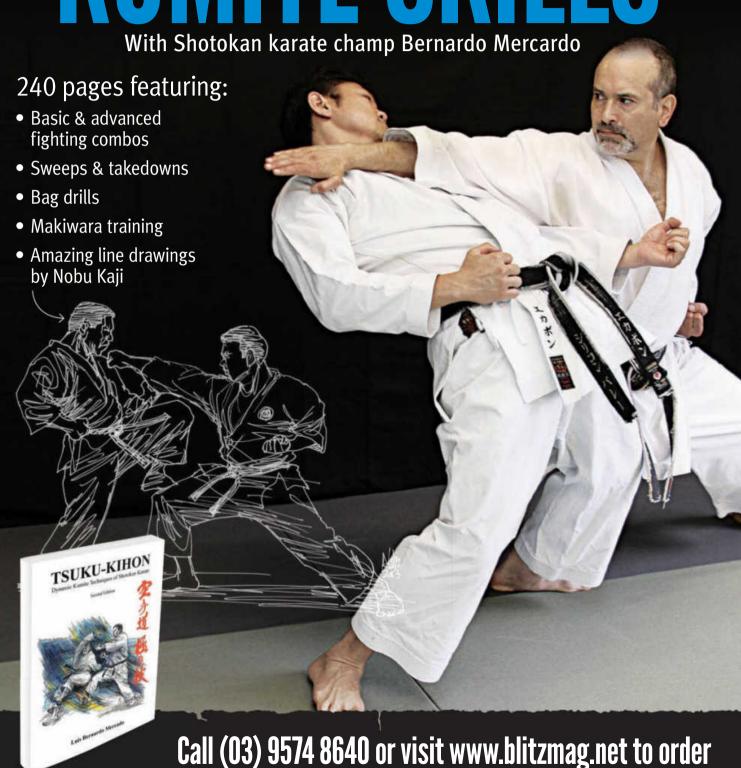
your efforts to heal or

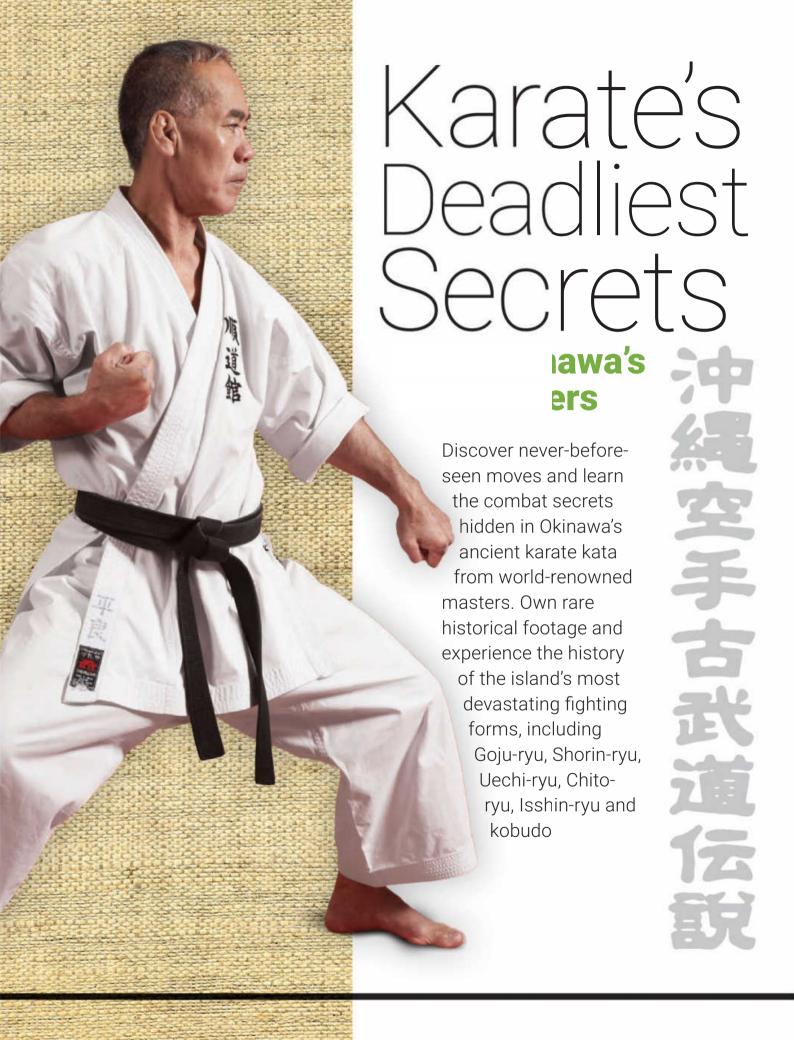
prevent injury. Next issue, we'll look at another approach: neurology and biofeedback.

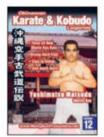


Matt Beecroft is an RKC Team Leader and Functional Movement System-certified strength coach with over 13 years' experience as a trainer. He's an Expert Level krav maga instructor, nationally accredited boxing coach and national fitness presenter. He also coaches amateur and professional muay Thai fighters. He can be contacted via his website www.realitysdc.com.au

# CHAMPIONSHIP KUMTE SKILLS







Yoshimatsu Matsuda: Shorin Ryu



Eihachi Ota: Shorin Ryu



Karate Kobudo Masters of the 1900s



Katsuya Miyahira: Shidokan Shorin Rvu



Shuguro Nakazato: Shorinkan Shorin Ryu



Kanei Uechi: Uechi Ryu



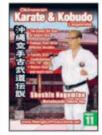
Tatsuo Shimabukuro: Isshin Ryu



Shinpo Matayoshi Kobudo



Tetsuhiro Hokama: Bo Jitsu



Shoshin Nagamine: Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu



Chosin Chibana: Shorin Ryu



Eisuke Akamine: Kobudo Hozon Shinkokai



Seikichi Odo: Ryukyu Kobujitsu



Masaji Taira: Bunkai Master



Dr Tsuyoshi Chitose: Chito Ryu Karate



Hojo Undo: Supplementary Training



Yoshitsune Senega: Uechi Ryu



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Jundokan Old School: 1984



Gichin Funakoshi: Shotokan



Eiichi Miyazato: Jundokan Goju Rvu



The Jundokan: More Then Just Kata



Masanobu Shinjo: Shobukan Goju Rvu



Meitoku Yagi: Meibukan Goju Ryu





# Always the Two Shall Meet

BLOCKING VS STRIKING IN KARATE PART ONE

Many see defending yourself with karate as a block-then-strike process — a 'tactical flaw', as it's frequently pointed out — but is that really the case? Here, senior Goju Ryu karate practitioners and veterans of applying the art 'for real', Sensei's Wayne Bridge and Peter McGuire, explain why the term 'block' is really a misnomer for techniques designed not only to stop, but to smash, strike and clear the way to the next target.

STORY & INSTRUCTION BY PETER MCGUIRE & WAYNE BRIDGE

hen a student begins training in Goju Ryu karate, they must learn many new processes designed to instil an understanding of functional movement, create new neural pathways and condition the body. Understandably, it will usually take several years to reach the proficiency in kihon (fundamental movements) necessary to become relaxed and explosive in its delivery - and it is at this latter stage when a 'block', or uke, really ceases to be just a block.

The Japanese got it right in saying that 'kihon is karate, and karate is kihon'; only through continuous practice and,

importantly, enthusiasm will we develop the understanding of our own human movement required to make karate 'work'. The same goes for kata, too, since kihon comes directly from the kata.

So, as we examine each kata and its form, we can adapt the breakdown of these movements (the *bunkai*, or combat applications) to practise kihon—the stances, strikes and defences. These defences allow the more proficient student to interpret that a block is not a block, but it is often also a strike—that is, a block done with such force that it disrupts the attacker. A good example of this is *jodan* (upper) uke, which

smashes up into the opponent's arm with power generated by torqueing the body and driving from the feet, with hips relaxed and then locking as the block contacts.

It should be noted, though, that hard/attacking blocks such as this are most effective when delivered at an angle so as to contact the soft parts of the incoming limb — and, given that this is not always possible, they are only a part of the defensive equation in Goju. This is obvious when we consider the translation of the style's name: go — hard — and ju — soft. The latter principle can be seen even in the hard blocking — where relaxed hips

and limbs are needed to react quickly and with power — but more clearly in those blocks that are really deflections or parries, designed to draw an opponent into a 'hole' via shifting your own body and redirecting theirs rather than striking the limb to inflict damage. (For an example, see the 'Taikyoku Mawashi Uke' sequence.) The soft blocking techniques are generally more circular than go blocks, so as to meet the incoming force from a different angle and avoid its impact, and are combined with tai sabaki, or 'body shifting', off the centreline.

Ju blocks can be seen in *kakie-uke*, the Goju equivalent

of kung fu's 'sticking-hands', whereby the defender will evade and trap the opponent's hands with wrist-jamming techniques in order to exploit the attacker's momentum or prevent them gaining any to begin with. Proficiency in this style of close-quarters fighting allows the defender to quickly cut off the attacker's options and open them up to fast and effective counter strikes.

#### **SIMULTANEOUS ACTION**

Some believe that karate defence is a process of 'block' then 'strike', with a distinct separation of each action. However, as students progress they discover that there is no time lag between the block and strike and that these

are, in many cases, done simultaneously — because, of course, any time lapse between your block and counter leaves a space open to be filled by your opponent's next hit. In this way, your simultaneous strike acts as a block against your opponent's next move, either in the literal sense by covering the path of their strike, or, better still, by forcing them to abort any intended follow-up in order to defend.

In some cases, too, a strike performs the function of both attacking and defending — an example of ultimate efficiency. When we dissect the bunkai and let our mind become one with the kata, we can truly appreciate what the founders of the style believed were

the key frameworks of Goju, and efficiency was certainly an underlying principle. For example, a rising elbow (empi) drives up the centre to strike the opponent's chin but also brings the arm into a high cover and puts the defender in a very commanding position, which can then lead to multiple empi strikes from various angles. In kakie, too, there are many examples of attacking the opponent's limb or body and balance before they can strike again — effectively a preemptive 'block'.

#### **HANDS ON HIPS?**

If you watch a group of karateka marching up and down a dojo in lines, drilling their basics in the form of performing blocks and strikes one after another, but not together, what you are witnessing is just that: basic. This is where it starts, learning the techniques in isolation, with the focus on getting the movement right.

At this stage, as the student develops their power through the training of basics, they are introduced to the concept of hikite — the withdrawal of the non-punching fist to the side of the body, for which karate is well known. There are many interpretations of hikite, the most common being that the simultaneous opposing movement of the withdrawing arm that helps to accelerate the striking arm and helps teach the 'hip-snap', etc. required for power. However, it has combat applications, too. The one that we consider most effective, and which is evident in many bunkai, is that we are gripping the opponent's clothing, limb, hair or flesh, which is bought back to the 'chamber' with an upturned wrist, bringing the biceps and then inner forearm close to your own rib cage, which generates considerably more power in the technique.

As we become more proficient, we also appreciate the acceleration that we are able to generate so as to deliver strikes, blocks and bridging techniques with the necessary speed and force. Before they even begin training kata, bunkai and kumite, beginners in IKO

#### KATA APPLICATION: TAIKYOKU JODAN #1 🔀



From a standard fighting range — i.e. roughly punching distance, where most confrontations begin...

...Sensei Bridge (right) throws a straight left and McGuire angles off and deflects it up with an upper block while moving his right leg out to the right, shifting his body off the centre line... ...and exposing Sensei Bridge's ribs to a counter punch (this can be done almost in unison and also sets up for the next move).

#### KATA APPI ICATION. TAIKYOKII IODAN #2 🔀



As the attacker grabs Sensei McGuire's lapel...

...McGuire locks his hand over the grabbing wrist and attacks the biceps of the grabbing arm with his forearm...

...then drives his forearm forward along the attacker's arm into the throat.

#### KATA APPLICATION: SEIYUNCHIN ✓



Goju Ryu spend considerable time building confidence and proficiency in their kicks and punches by hitting pads — filming them and having them watch their movement also allows them to make large leaps of progress in correcting their body mechanics within a short period of time, readying them to practically apply their techniques as per the kata bunkai.

#### THE TRUTH IN KATA

Bunkai training involves practising the key interpretations of each movement of a kata, either by yourself or with a partner (*tori* and *uke*). When you practise

with intensity and apply the movements from a kata 'for real', you are able to appreciate through your own creative thinking the kata's bunkai and how this creates the movement for simultaneous blocks and counters.

When we examine the beginner or White-belt kata of Goju Ryu, we see, for example, an upper-block defence delivered simultaneously with a punch to the opponent's solar plexus (see Taikyoku Jodan sequence). This requires that we move from the centreline with fast footwork so as to maximise the delivery of the punch and also to bridge the gap, maintaining awareness

of the opponent's follow-up attack options.

The next phase in the learning of the kata and bunkai is the delivery of sequential movements that may include, for example, threeto-six sections incorporating blocking and striking, while also simultaneously moving from one stance to another and keeping your opponent under pressure, and ultimately taking them to ground or applying a joint lock or submission. The Seiyunchin kata sequence shown here is one example of this.

Kata allows the student to appreciate the variable delivery speeds of each movement so as to maintain proper alignment and balance, and this allows them to learn and 'feel' the kata so that over time they can increase the speed of the movement and ultimately gain proficiency in using both arms together, and each for potentially more than one purpose. A deeper knowledge of each kata brings a greater appreciation of Goju Ryu's close-quarter fighting aspects and how the components of the kata are thoughtfully considered in regards to your own balance and your opponent's position in relation to you, and with consideration of the likely or intended result of the previous move. You also

come to understand the strong relationship between your blocks and strikes in all this: the former must always lead to the latter (or at least to an attack such as a grab or takedown, if not a strike), or they will be delivered simultaneously for best effect. Each defence is targeted to a pressure point or anatomically weak area, and/ or it creates the opening for a simultaneous or follow-up strike, grab, etc.

#### **BLOCKING FOR PURPOSE**

When you examine 'sport karate', it's clear this was not what the original masters had in mind when they developed their kata, hence the vast difference between the movements of the two. While there are very good and useful components of sport karate - for example, the agility and cardiovascular fitness levels required to perform at a high level — the masters had a vastly different aim and thus a more functional approach to kata. which provided the template for the techniques that were designed to save their own lives in conflict, not score the first point.

As we identify the transition of each movement of the kata, this allows us to appreciate the distance required for the effectiveness of that movement and how we can overpower an opponent within two or three strikes — not only via the strikes but even our blocks and grabs, and also the positioning of our knees against the opponent's legs to unbalance them. The role of go - forceful blocking again comes into play here; for example, used against kicks to take the opponent's balance. This can be done by smashing the opponent's leg with your forearm or with your own shin, or sometimes it may pay to absorb the kick with your body before it reaches the apex of its 'power arc', to jam the opponent and cause them to lose their momentum and footing. When you are rapidly

#### KATA APPLICATION: TAIKYOKU MAWASHI UKE 💝



hitting soft parts of the body with forceful blocks — for example, the inner biceps, forearm or throat (as in the 'Taikyoku' sequences shown) — this creates additional leverage as it sets you up for the next flowing attack and also allows you to disrupt the attacker's rhythm and intended action.

In sport karate, of course, a block can be used to hurt and thus affect an opponent's performance, but as it is not a scoring technique (and many practitioners are not sufficently conditioned to use hard blocks, either), it is neglected in the practice.

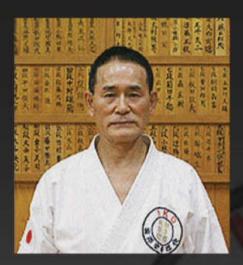
In a real situation — as in, when your opponent is trying to hit you with full force — both the hard and soft (ju) blocks and parries provide a way of exploiting the opponent's force. The first is by hitting a vulnerable point such as inside the opponent's punching arm, thereby their own force contributes to the impact; the second is by shifting and deflecting an opponent away or into a hole

you've created, such that their own force contributes to them overbalancing and exposing themselves to your followup strike.

So, it's important to remember that Goju kata have many 'hidden applications' that may not be apparent looking at kihon training, and if you look at them and their applications with an educated eye, you will see that the term 'block' does not tell you much about the true utility of a technique.

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SOTOKANDA, CHIYODA WARD, TOKYO JAPAN



Gonnohyoue Yamamoto So-Shihan 10th Dan Chief Executive Master



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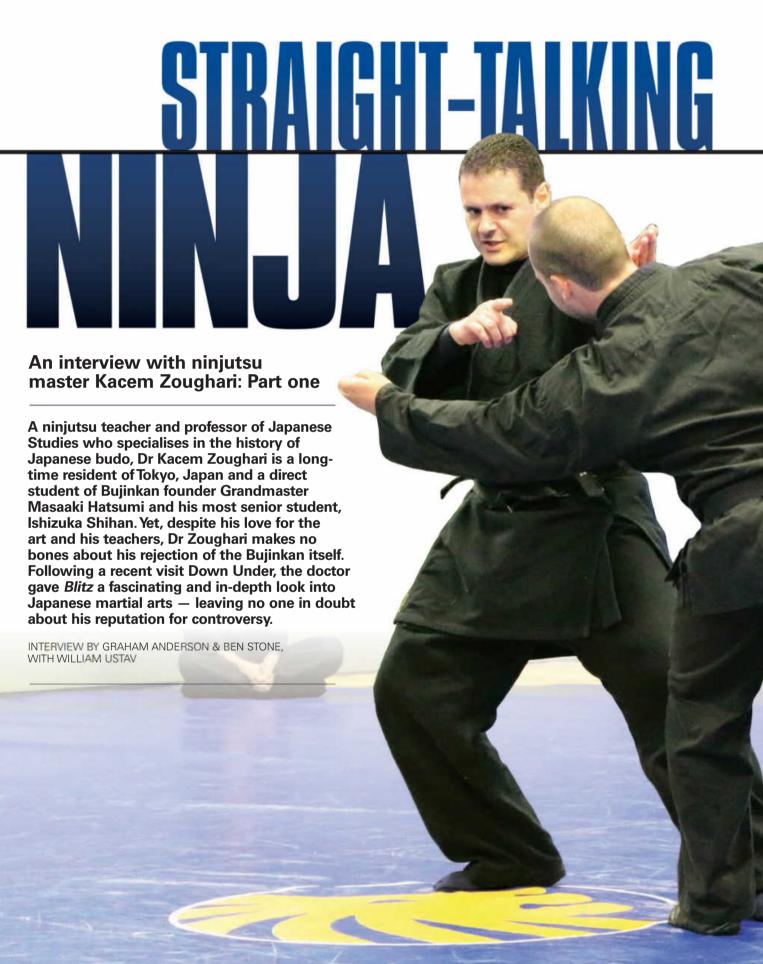
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randmaster Masaaki Hatsumi, the soke of the Bujinkan, seems very unlike other Japanese heads of budo with his purple hair and the like. Would you say this is the case?

To tell you the truth, I do not really care what the colour of his hair is or other things of this nature. The most important thing to remember is the message in the bottle, not the bottle itself — what I mean here is, how the man is, the way he lives the art...how he carries the art and becomes one with it.

The difference with Hatsumi Soke is clear: he will let you do what you want! Whether you are right or wrong, he will not judge you. This is quite hard for us Westerners because we are used to being 'led', to believe that the master is a teacher...but in the classical bujutsu and heiho (兵法). the classical art of combat and war strategies and tactics, the master does not teach. he transmits. This means that the disciple is already a warrior — a grown man, not a child — so there is no reason to tell him what he should do or choose, because if he cannot find it by himself, he will die during combat.

In the time of feudal war, to transmit a science of combat, to find and choose the right disciple, was a very heavy task. Everything was based on a deep trust; in primary sources such as the Ichi Nin Ikkoku Inka (一人 -国印可), written in 1565 by Kamiizumi Ise No Kami, we find the phrase seijitsu no jin (誠実の仁), which shows that the character, the disciple's heart or nature, should be deeply honest and sincere, benevolent. So, obviously, finding a true disciple to show [this] is not easy, especially when you are aware of the fact that all the classical bujutsu as well as all the art and disciplines

of Japan are based on the concept of isshi soden (一子相伝): transmission from heart to heart. This goes beyond words; it means that everything is direct and that there is no need for words. Both the master and the disciple understand each other, the two hearts are in sync. This is how Takamatsu Soke formed his relationship and transmitted the arts to Hatsumi Soke.

If you start to judge someone on his appearance or from an aesthetic aspect, the way he is, you judge from what you think you know according to your own value system and morals, and you cannot see beyond them. For a master like Hatsumi Soke, this is a very good test in order to know someone's heart and intention. Like many masters within their art and ryu-ha (system), Hatsumi Soke is the complete reflection of the essence of ninjutsu, the reflection of the nine rvu-ha that he received from Takamatsu Sensei. The way he is represents the deep expression of an essence which is about no form, no trace, no intention, complete and deep, always in flow, between weakness and strength, flexibility and force, light and shadow, but always in the shadow of the art's heart.

#### How would you describe him as a teacher?

It is very difficult to measure someone who gives without wanting anything in return, who is and must stay the example to reach, to copy, and never let go... always on the top at even 84 years old, always taking the class, always flexible, always with a light smile and who still enjoys the art and keeps a deep respect for his master, Takamatsu Sensei. He gives to people what they want because he knows how the shugyo (修行) — the deep and constant practice of this art — is not easy, it



is not for everyoneeveryone. He knows the difficulty and understands more than anyone the weight of the transmission as well as the legacy. This is the reason why he is light and open to everyone, whatever the style, the man, the religion, the country, the language, and most importantly, in his capacity to say, "I do not know..." He has incredible interest in any art, any ryu, whatever the style...this openness, to study everything and not be limited or to stop at any level, vision, state of mind.

In this case, as you can see, the purple hair is just a colour. I prefer to see the heart of the man, long term, and I have not been disappointed once. And be sure that, as a scholar, I know how to stay neutral; in this case I do not play the slave or the 'yes-yes' student, I speak my mind freely and according to my heart. This is the reason why I have learned Japanese, too.

#### Who is your teacher under Hatsumi Soke, and how does his approach differ to the grandmaster and other Bujinkan seniors?

My teacher is right now the oldest student of Hatsumi Soke — after four students, Mr Fukumoto (dead), Mr Yonekawa (quit in the early days), Mr Manaka (creator of the Jinenkan) and Mr Tanemura (creator of the Genbukan). His name is Tetsuji Ishizuka and he is well known by everyone, even the ones who badmouth him. No one has such a close relationship with Hatsumi Soke like Ishizuka Shihan does; no one shares the same history with Hatsumi Soke and with the creation of the Bujinkan! Most of the Westerners used to come to his dojo; he used to translate for Hatsumi Soke a long time ago. He was involved in everything until he had to step back in order to support

his family and because he had a very important job. He was the deputy chief of the fire department of Noda, in charge of the entire budget of all the fire departments of the Chiba prefecture...he had to be in the field and station constantly, and every night kept his dojo by running his class. I have witnessed this since 1989. Ishizuka Shihan started at Hatsumi Soke 's dojo when he was 16 years old. He was from Noda and he has never left Hatsumi Soke and has always stayed by his side. He is the senior of all the other shihan such as Seno, Noguchi, Nagato, Someya, Shiraishi, etc.

He sticks to what Hatsumi Soke taught him at the beginning: the densho, the art, no compromise, no ranks for nothing, no trading the art, no prostituting the art... With him it's practise and practise, study and study, and respect the art and each technique — there is no self-promotion. He does

not teach for the money, his job has provided him with a pretty comfortable life now. He has a passion for Hawaiian music, and is a singer and a bass player in a band that plays all over Tokyo professionally now that he has retired from the fire department after 30 years. He practises the art because he loves martial arts: he teaches because he believes he has a strong ethical duty toward Hatsumi Soke, the art and the nine ryu-ha, in the way Hatsumi Soke taught him. He also has been awarded various menkyo kaiden (免許皆伝 licence of full transmission) from Hatsumi Soke. This year marks his 50th year of training with Hatsumi Soke!

His approach is simple: he does not lie to you, nor does he do it for the money, he does not care about the number of the people who come to practise or not. He is the same, always smiling, always laughing, and is the most sincere and honest man. If what you do does not work. he is strict but fair. But the best way to find out is to come and visit him, to experience him and see with your own heart and eyes. This is the best way to know someone, isn't it? True practice, like everything in life, is about direct experience and to go and meet reality, which is a reflection, an expression, of the truth. You might like it or not, maybe some prefer to just be a high rank and have a huge following or be famous, or whatever — everyone chooses according to his own appetite and what he looks for. But one should not forget that every choice includes consequences, and the street, the real fight, the life problems are there to test your practice, which is an extension of the relationship with the master, the relationship with the art and the practice of this art as well.

Bujinkan appears as one lineage or branch of ninjutsu — that of Masaaki Hatsumi. Is this the case, or

#### are there are other schools that have come from the same lineage...and if so, what are their differences?

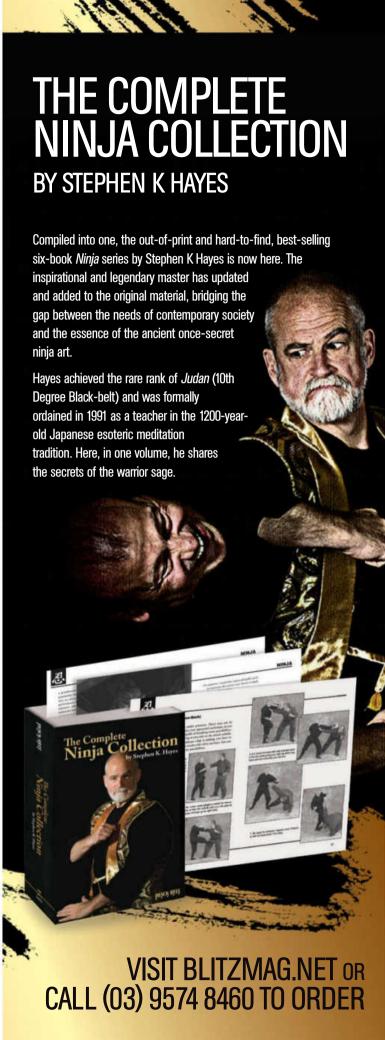
First, it is important to be precise on the word you use... Bujinkan is not at all a lineage or a branch of ninjutsu, it is just the name of an organisation, the name of the dojo. Many like it exist in Japan and have done so since the Edo period. Now, for many people, it became the name of a strange style whereby everyone created his own way based on the very subjective word and state of mind called 'feeling'. Honestly and sincerely speaking, I do not care for the organisation, with all of the childish politics, two-faces, nonsense movement and impossible techniques it uses in the mainstream. My only concern stays with the nine ryu-ha, the master-disciple relationship and everything that goes with it: deep and wide knowledge, respect of each detail and technique without forgetting anyone or the history, the respect of the

biomechanics as well as all the art and style, and, of course, the respect of the student's body, mind and integrity.

Now, to answer to your questions, the nine ryu-ha received by Hatsumi Soke from Takamatsu Soke can be divided like this (some will say the opposite, but I can argue with anyone on that and invite anyone to do so): seven ryu-ha received from Toda Sensei, one from Ishitani Sensei (Kukishindenryu) and one from Mizutani Sensei (Takagi Yoshin-ryu). The seven ryu-ha from Toda Sensei are the ones that are simply based on ninjutsu practice, mind, strategy and combat. The one from Ishitani Sensei is also considered as ninjutsu because of the history of the Kuki family and his relationship with the Iga and Koga area [home of the ninja clans]. Finally, the last one from Mizutani Sensei is a sogo-bujutsu (総合武 術): a composite system of combat that includes different disciplines based on the art of

# "RANK IS JUST PAPER, AND IT'S ONLY GOOD FOR THE TOILET," TAKAMATSU SENSEI USED TO SAY





ju-taijutsu. The founder of the Takagi Yoshin-ryu was a top student of the Takeuchi-ryu Koshi No Mawari, one of the very first ryu-ha of jujutsu in Japan. This is a sogo-bujutsu that deals with the bugei juhappan (武芸十八般) or the 18 disciplines of combat that any ryu-ha before Edo period used and taught, and where all the past soke developed highlevel skills.

But this is the history before Takamatsu Sensei, according to his autobiography, Meiji Moroku Otoko (only Hatsumi Soke has it). Takamatsu explained everything inside: his practice and relationship with the art, the difference between his masters, the way they taught him, his life in China, etc. We need to understand that Takamatsu Sensei was deeply influenced by his grandfather (some say his uncle, but this is a misreading of the kanji used to write 'grandfather'). Toda Sensei, who was from Iga and taught him the way to move as well as the combat science of ninjutsu. So before Takamatsu Sensei started under Ishitani Sensei and Mizutani, he was deeply influenced by the ninjutsu form and spirit taught by Toda Sensei, so it's easy to understand that when he learned the techniques from the other two masters (Ishitani and Mizutani), he applied the main principle of ninjutsu: suieishin (水影心), 'the heart (mind) reflects the water or the shade of the water'. This is the capacity to copy any kind of technique or style, and make them better. It's something that every high-class bushi (warrior) or founder of a ryuha, no matter what the style, could do more or less, and in the case of ninjutsu, this state was pushed to the extreme.

So, for me, based on the writing of Takamatsu Sensei, the nine ryu-ha are shaped in ninjutsu's mind and form. There are, of course, differences between the ryu-ha, techniques, weapons, etc.



but the goal is the same: to kill and prevent danger, and survive. Some are more direct, more pragmatic, some have more details, some less...you must practise, study and work hard on the common points of each in order to make sense and measure the depth of the knowledge accumulated by each generation behind each technique.

But to tell you the truth, it's not the lineage or the difference that matters here. It is what you can do against anyone and how you can explain, present, prove to them — no matter the master, the shihan, the fighter or the style you have in the front you!

Most Japanese martial arts' senior grades go up to either 10th Dan or 9th Dan, the latter being in recognition that one can

#### never achieve 'perfection' and must always strive for the next level. Why are there so many Dan grades in the Bujinkan?

Well, your question is in relation with the rank system and the way ranks are given in the Bujinkan more than anything else. I agree that this is an interesting topic among many, but I do not care for the organisation, so I do not care about the rank system. First of all, I must be honest about that, like I have been in front of many people, whether they are from the Bujinkan or other organisations. I have also presented this in Japan in many universities and in front of many high ranks of many styles: I do not believe in rank or the system of rank in classical martial arts and modern arts in general.

Why? The reason is simple: the history of any ryu-ha before the Edo period shows that ranks did not exist. The only thing that existed was the inka (印可) or attestation of transmission, which means that the disciple who received it has been taught to a certain level, but it doesn't mean necessarily that he understood it or that he could do it at the moment he received it! Phrases like "now you must practise even more" at the beginning of the attestation, and "disciples who study the art must always keep on practising hard and deep" at the end of the attestation, is proof that it's just the beginning.

Before the Edo period, the true rank was how many heads you took on the battlefield; how many great warriors you fought and killed, what your behaviour and actions were during war and combat while fighting with the enemy, etc. A man, a disciple, was measured according to his actions, not according to the number of techniques and how much he paid for his rank. And, with time, the attestation or any kind of rank, paper and ink, could be bought or sold. The need for money for living, supporting a family, were good enough reasons for someone to run a dojo as a profession and created a need for people to reach a certain position or status. And in the Meiji period, the attestation became a rank (Dan and Kyu) system with Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo. But in this case it's based more on school education, like examinations in the university; it's not on the long term but the short term. The rank you could have passed yesterday, the way you could do a technique yesterday or performed a week later, will be very different later. Maybe worse, maybe better, who really knows?

This is the reason I do not believe in rank, I believe in true and long-term practice, action and deep knowledge. I think the way someone moves, acts and behaves deeply reflects the true value of his practice and the purpose of his practice as well. But if someone pretends to be a high rank, who wants to be recognised and respected because of the paper he received, who is arrogant, hurts the student in order to show how great he is, behaves like a 'master', has no knowledge, and always refuses the direct confrontation, well this type of person is just...

In ninjutsu there is no rank, only action, application, skills...and please note that in 'skills' there is the word 'kill'. I think that the nature of the word here shows that everything should be a reflection or an expression of the reality, and everyone knows that reality is cruel, hard, direct and there is no compromise. Can you knock down your opponent or not? That is the question. Then the second question is, can do you it with class and style and without bad intentions?

So I do not believe in rank but I understand the purpose, in a social way, in an education system or for sports, according to its rules and scales. But the problem is that sooner or later there is a limit and the reality of the street and the true confrontation is always there to show and mark the difference with rank.

"Rank is just paper, and its only good for the toilet," Takamatsu Sensei used to say to Hatsumi Soke. I deeply believe that to be true as well. Unfortunately, the world is made in such a way that the

Of course, I respect the hard work and dedication, even if it's limited in a certain way, behind the rank of someone who has worked hard for his Black-belt, etc. The hard work in judo, karate, kendo and BJJ is really present and must be respected. But it's important to keep in mind that it reflects just a moment in life, not all of life, and not even the meaning

of their techniques, they are true in a certain way, their results and actions speak for themselves. They are dedicated and very tough and disciplined and it shows in their practice. But in the Bujinkan? Well, I have no comment and I do not really care.

The last thing I can say is

this, as I have translated many times for Hatsumi Soke during class, like a few others who have lived in Japan for a long time (Mark Lithgow, Mark O'Brien, Andrew Young, Shawn Grey, Bruce, Doug, Larry, Paul, etc.) and who keep translating for him now, they have to hear the same phrase all the time: Hatsumi Soke said that the 15th Dan means that it's the start for everyone. So it's a direct reference to the historical aspect of Ujin, which was the age, 15 years old, of a young boy to go to war after he had passed certain tests. So the rank does not really express anything, only something to help, to push, to go more deeply, to keep on practising. But we will be able to see the value of their rank after Hatsumi Soke stops teaching...here, again, the rank does not show the future, but just the moment when you received it...and everyone knows how humans can change, for the better or the worse.

Now the high ranks in other organisations are also based on politics, actions done for the organisation, not just the skill anymore. For me the best rank is what you could do, when you are old and must face any style, if you can keep the flexibility required at the highest level and still practise.

As a conclusion to this question, I do not care for, or of the rank, but the person. Rank means nothing to me.

Check out the next issue of Blitz for part two of this interview covering Dr Zougharis views on ninjutsu technique, the debate about the true history of modern schools, and debunking ninjutsu mysticism.

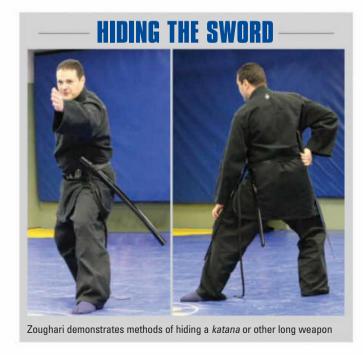


# "THE WAY PEOPLE MOVE, ACT, BEHAVE, SELL THEMSELVES, PROMOTE THEMSELVES, THE WAY THEY WALK, IS ENOUGH PROOF TO SHOW WHAT THEY WANT AND WHO THEY REALLY ARE."

name, the university, the paper is more important than the human, the one who should carry the rank. Everyone should re-think that the name, fame, university's name, rank, paper, etc, cannot exist without the one who created it first: that is man himself.

of shugyo (修行) or keiko (稽古) used in classical bujutsu and ninjutsu. Those words include the aspects of the path and deep reflection of the past, of all of your life, so it is difficult to measure.

Now in the case of the Bujinkan...well, I do not care. Ranks are given for many reasons: supporting the organisation, by promoting and ranking other people, helping to organise Taikai, etc. Do not forget practice as well, but what is the nature of this practice? Does the rank received in the Bujinkan really and deeply reflect the relationship with the art and the master or just the fact that you came to Japan and sacrificed your money for the promotion, etc.? Honestly, like I said, the way people move, act, behave, sell themselves, promote themselves, the way they walk, is enough proof to show what they want and who they really are. In that case, I much prefer people from MMA, BJJ, boxing, muay Thai, wrestling, judo, etc. because even if it is a sport and no one died/dies during the creation and application



#### FIGHT LIFE WITH BRIAN EBERSOLE

## **Going Eber-Solo**

After 15 years in the game and close to 70 fights, one of MMA's true characters has finally decided his time has come to give it up. A fan favourite across the globe, the fairy-tale ending wasn't to be for Brian Ebersole, who made the announcement after his loss to Omari Akhmedov at UFC Fight Night 68 (his first ever loss via TKO). Acknowledging that years of training had taken their toll, Ebersole knew the time was right to "leave it to the young guys now". Blitz caught up with the adopted Aussie regarded as one of the pioneers of Australian MMA to chat about his amazing career — from fighting the small shows to being on the cusp of a UFC title shot.

INTERVIEW BY BOON MARK SOUPHANH

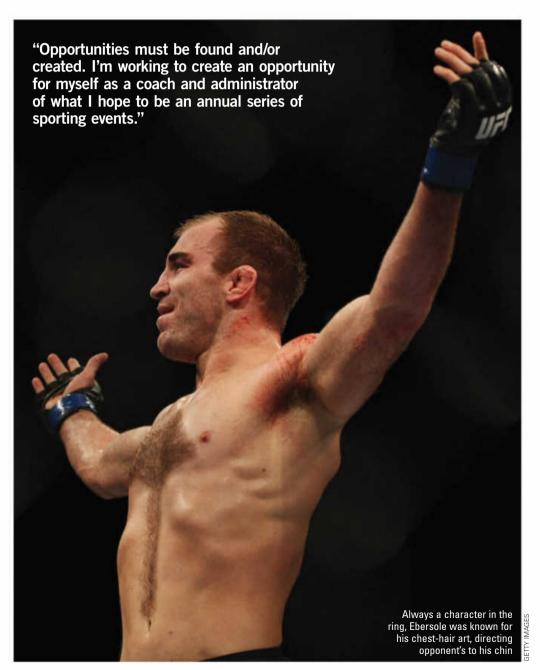
rian, first of all, congratulations on a wonderful career — now that retirement has somewhat sunk in, how are you feeling about your recent decision to stop fighting professionally?

Thanks. I'm not sure I have considered every aspect of what retirement 'means' other than that I won't be setting another MMA fight any time soon...or later. Insofar as my personal feelings, I doubt that I've felt the entire range of emotions that come with the decision. Humans are complex beings, and with that, I am sure there will be a lot of moments I'll spend in reflection regarding my time in fighting.

I will spend time in gyms and dojos, so I'll probably have a few flashbacks like AI Bundy from *Married with Children*. In the near future, I hope I'll feel thankful and wise for the timing of my decision to retire from competitive MMA.

Ultimately, was it the rigours of training and the injuries that took their toll?

Yes, considering that I've put my body through a risk-filled ride through a difficult sport. Fifteen years is a long time to be doing anything, let alone MMA, and my fight career began after the 15 years of wrestling. I can say, based on logic, statistics and anecdotal evidence, that I've not made the worst decision as far as career management goes in the history of MMA.



I've only had the customary 'lazy week' that comes postfight. We'll see what it feels like in a few months without having booked another fight. I'm sure I'll have had a few unique thoughts between now and then. It should be an interesting year as I turn the page, in any case.

#### So, after such a long and decorated career in MMA, you plan on staying heavily involved in the sport?

Well, I mean, I do plan to continue training regularly. I don't have a full-time job as a coach, but next summer I do have plans to host both wrestling and MMA camps in Pensacola, Florida — so I'm hoping to have a full summer of work and coaching, with a new wrestling mat, an old boxing ring, and enough of the accompaniments to ensure we can have professional and varied training.

There's a beautiful state park here, and set aside on a large ranch are cabins set for housing, a training complex, and plenty of land and outdoor activities. So the plan is to invite and host athletes, coaches, and even the families - training and holiday activities for all!

Whether or not I have a heavy involvement in the sport, I can't really say. Opportunities must be found and/or created. I'm working to create an opportunity for myself as a coach and administrator of what I hope to be an annual series of sporting events — training camps. competitions, seminars, etc. at the aforementioned 'ranch' in Florida

For the rest of this summer. though, I have a few projects I need to finish. I've bought two homes which need some TLC and I hope to see them sell by this year's end. So that's exciting, new, challenging, and will be my short-term focus.

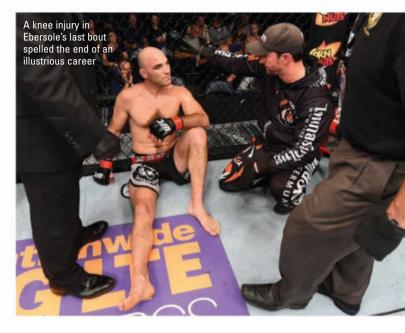
#### Would you say the 11-fight win streak between 2008 and 2012 was the best period throughout your career in terms of health and form?

Certainly. I was able to focus on training full time in late 2007. The results of that time period are a direct result of just being in the gym every day — consistency. I have a great appreciation for that time in my life. I was healthy. training for skill and fitness with some harder sparring sessions spaced out well enough, as well as having 10-to-15 true workouts during the week of mat time and ring time. This put me in the best form than any time previous.

What would you say were the most memorable moments for your career?

There are so many. First of





all, I have to say meeting my wife. And the one time, or million, I closed my eyes and said 'thank you' to the cosmos, stars. God. her parents, her spirit animal, and her mind for the companionship and awesomeness she throws into my every moment.

There's also my first fight — the sounds, smells, feelings that all came with it. My attempt at striking, laughing as I entered with a parry/backfist combination from a JKD seminar just because it was an entry move. I figured I should enter with a real move before I got down into all that grabbing [wrestling] and that pretzelmaking-type stuff [BJJ].

The support of friends, teammates, the family, and the tense feeling that I know they feel as they await a result have also been amazing. Also, the excitement of getting off an airplane to fight in a new city and getting my passport stamped. And, my UFC debut being 4-0 with the feeling of 'skies being the limit' was nice.

Oh, and that sweet, soft, succulent 'retirement cookie' that I had in New Orleans. It seemed like a nice thing to eat at the time and it even made

a cameo on the film during an interview in the back of the arena, post-fight.

All together there are too many cherished moments shared with fantastic people to list here. I could answer this question for days.

#### What were the low points? How close were you to calling it guits after the back-to-back losses to James **Head and Rick Story?**

I told my high school wrestling coach and my wife after the fight that I was retiring. I had major issues in the final weeks of training camp going into UFC 167 — that was not fun. But athletes play hurt often; it's just part of the game.

So yeah, retirement thoughts were very present after UFC 167, but I felt I'd have a chapter of rehabilitation to see if I could regain fitness and athleticism. The martial arts training picked up as long as the fitness training improved, so I talked myself into competing again. It took nine months, but I was fairly healthy through the long leadup to UFC 178.

After kicking your career off at 3-1, did you ever think you'd fight for 15 years? Take us back to your thoughts

#### FIGHT LIFE WITH BRIAN EBERSOLE

#### after that first loss, against Chris Albandia on the Total Fight Challenge (Illinois).

I had a pretty good time in my first bouts. My first three wins were all submissions.

Chris Albandia was the name that's attached to my first loss via decision. I didn't feel terrible; I had a loss to another Illinois wrestler. After that fight, I was just disappointed, but I understood why I lost. I didn't get injured, and winning a rematch was possible — he'd say a remote possibility, I would say I'd win a few out of 10

The loss surely was not a deterrent; in fact, I think I gained more confidence in the fact that Chris was a guy that was older than me and was truly a physically impressive athlete.

### Out of all your fights, which one would you consider your favourite fight?

That's a hard one. There's too many actually. But one good story - in the early 2000s, I ran Shane Schartzer through a cage in Mexico. I'd done it before, running a guy into one of the cage's posts, padding over the top, of course. This time, I ran at the double posts and we went through the doors. He separated his shoulder through it all. On the next takedown, I was smart and ruthless enough to grab onto that same side with a Kimura. No cranking necessary, a tap came soon enough. It's a good highlight, good 'fight-IQ', and a good story to tell from time to time.

across the world, you've become known as one of MMA's true globetrotters. What would you say were the main differences in the training environments of the USA, Australia and Thailand? In the USA, there's more organised sports — many via our school systems, both public and private. I feel this

Fighting and training



"I was able to focus on training full time in late 2007. The results of that time period are a direct result of just being in the gym every day — consistency."

viewers, more participants, more cities, more promotions, etc. It's home of the biggest fight organisations, MMA supercamps, and some of the best coaches around.

In Australia, there are relatively few sports organised via the schools. Local clubs are more often formed to make opportunities for kids to play sport and train martial arts. With that being said, there's a great muay Thai culture and the athletes and events are of a high quality. The buzz around MMA in Australia is exciting and there is a talented pool of fighters with new up-andcomers surfacing all the time. Some Australians have made international headlines and there are some guvs with fantastic records.

As for Thailand, there's the exotic side of things with the different food, weather, jungle, language, and the differences in how they live compared to Westerners. Things are more organic in a 'salt of the earth' or 'tied to the earth' kind of way — things like resources for building, eating, cooking, etc. During my time at Tiger Muay

Thai, I learnt that the Thais seem to talk about fighting on a much deeper level than Westerners. It's less about wins and losses and they're certainly more aware or willing to admit that it's about how you play the game.

Training can be the numberone priority. For Thais that fight, they train full time and many will teach sometimes also if they are fortunate. For foreigners, training takes the main stage because many foreigners can't obtain a visa that offers work rights — so you have to be unemployed, basically. If you aren't training, you're out spending money. So, many visitors can focus and just train over there during their relatively short stays.

### What are the keys to longevity in MMA in your opinion?

Realistic measures regarding training and competition — overtraining is a thing. Just training with little to no concern of whether or not you've sparred 27 days in a row isn't always a great modus operandi. You have to be both clear and reasonable with expectations

regarding your coaches, manager and self in regards to training and taking fights.

'Keep it playful', as Rener Gracie seems to say often, is a good mantra. You need to train to improve yourself daily, not to prove yourself daily. Prove you can trade attempts with me for an hour instead of proving that you're willing to run your head through a wall to avoid losing a three-minute round.

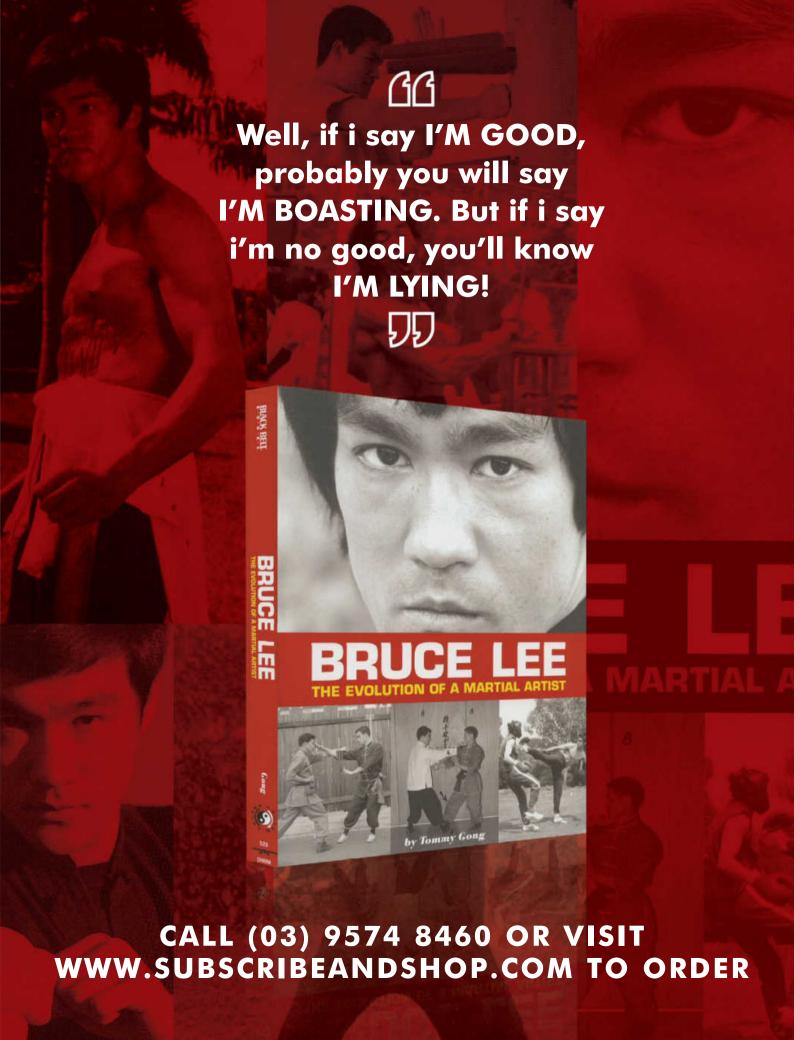
Also, not letting your cortisol levels remain too high for too long. Chronic cortisol levels lead to poorer performance, mood, function of the organs, and other problems.

Of course, there's also talent, luck and having a great team.

#### What does the future hold for Brian Ebersole? Can we expect to see more of you in Australia?

My wife is beautifully Australian! We are living in the USA currently, but she and I will always return to Australia — settling there in the future is certainly an option we've discussed and that excites us! I will be there in late 2015. I'd love to think that I could compete in a grappling tournament should there be any scheduled and with a decent set of circumstances - stuff like travel, costs, date and my health. And I'll surely be aiming to guest-speak and instruct at a few gyms where possible!

encourages more overall



#### FIGHT NEWS WITH JARRAH LOH



# Aussies Battle to be Fit for UFC 193

Melbourne's full UFC card is yet to be decided, but Conor McGregor wants no part.

ustralian fighters Jake
Matthews and Bec
Rawlings were forced
out of UFC Fight Night 72 in
Glasgow, Scotland on July 18
with injuries.

Lightweight Matthews was scheduled to fight Mickael Lebout and was replaced by undefeated Finnish fighter Teemu Packalen. Frenchman Lebout won the fight by decision.

A fractured femur neck in her left leg forced Rawlings out of her much-anticipated fight against Joanne Calderwood. Rawlings was replaced by UFC debutante Cortney Casey. Calderwood defeated Casey by unanimous decision in the fight of the night.

It is unknown when the Australians will fight next.



Jake Matthews

**Vik Grujic** has opened up about his tough exit from the UFC and the financial reality of trying to make it on the world's biggest stage.

Grujic was one of a number of recent UFC fighters to be cut from the roster, including Dylan Andrews, the dream coming to the end with one email.

"I sat there and I read it over

and over a few times," Grujic told news.com.au.

"The words are pretty much burnt into my memory at the moment. There was a lot of emotion around it, I was devastated. Sure enough, when I opened the email from [UFC matchmaker] Joe Silva, it was the bad news I had been dreading.

"I'm still trying to come to terms with not being employed by the UFC. I feel like I gave so much of myself to the organisation; of course, I'm a fighter and I have to perform, but at the same time, with everything that has been happening over the past few years, it kind of makes you feel like the rug has been pulled from beneath you, and it's extremely difficult to take."

There are often rumblings about how little UFC fighters make, especially for those fighters just trying to break into the company and make a name for themselves. Grujic is a prefect example of that, selling some personal memorabilia just to put food on the table.

"I've got a world of respect for the UFC and I hope that somehow they have a change of heart," Grujic said. "That being said, there hasn't been a great deal of money made by myself over the last couple of years being in the UFC, and with the little money that I did make, I reinvested it in training camps.

"Me selling that Reebok merchandise on eBay is hopefully money that I can use



to put food on the table for the time being. All the money that I got after my last fight went to debts — I had two mortgage payments, money that I had borrowed off friends and family and now I'm virtually broke again."

Hector Lombard has some time to kill thanks to a one-year suspension by the Nevada State Athletic Commission, but the Olympian plans to stay active during the break.

The adopted Aussie is planning to participate in the Abu Dhabi Combat Club tournament in August, but he'd also like a beef-squashing grappling bout with Josh Barnett.

"I've actually been calling Josh Barnett out so we can have a fight at Metamoris," said Lombard on Submission Radio.

"I gotta be fair. He's been making good comments about me lately. I kind of like to squash the beef between us... I have nothing against him anymore. I kind of just let it flow.

"But I do, you know if the opportunity comes and we can compete in a grappling competition with Metamoris or any grappling competition, I would be more than happy to compete against Josh. That's for sure... With all due respect, I





see myself winning. I don't see him beating me, and I hope that one day Metamoris can make that fight happen."

The beef stems from some incidents between the pair where Barnett tried to bully Lombard in the gym.

New Zealander **Daniel Hooker** feels he's earned a spot on the main card of UFC 193 in Melbourne later this year following his emphatic head-kick KO of Hatsu Hioki at UFC Fight Night: Miocic vs. Hunt.

"I will be on that card without a doubt," Hooker told Fight! Australia magazine. "I want to be on the main card — I think I earned the spot."

Hooker and Hioki were putting on a pretty even performance during the curtain raiser to the main card when Hooker sent the crowd wild with a massive head-kick that made Hioki's knees buckle. Hooker seized the moment, got in a few more punches and left Hioki lying face first on the canvas.

"It was cool; it was a big show and it was just before the main event," said Hooker. "You've got to set it up, you've got to get the crowd going — I did that, so I'm real happy."

He may be a New Zealand native, but Hooker has had just as many fights here in Australia as he has had in his home country. He had a number of fights in the Australian Fighting Championship (AFC), claiming and defending the company's

Lightweight title along the way.

"I think I've had about half my fights in Australia, so I'm very used to fighting here. I came up in the Australian scene and I'm very comfortable fighting here," said Hooker.

Here's hoping we can see the exciting Kiwi talent back in Melbourne this November.

A super-fight between Ronda Rousey and **Christine 'Cyborg' Justino** remains alive after the Brazilian defended her Invicta FC Featherweight Championship at Invicta 13.

Justino made quick account of New Zealand's Faith Van Duin at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas. The number one ranked 145 pound women's fighter ended the fight just 45 seconds in after an onslaught of punches and a knee to the mid-section of Van Duin forced the challenger to the canvas before a series of punches forced the referee to stop the bout.

Justino's fight saw her win the performance of the night alongside Amber Leibrock, who knocked out Moldovan fighter Marina Shafir in 37 seconds from punches.

In the co-main event,
American Tonya Evinger won the
Bantamweight title after beating
Irene Aldana in the fourth
round by repeated punches.
In the third title fight of the
night, Japan's Ayaka Hamasaki
won the Atomweight title by
defeating champion Herica
Tiburcio on split decision.



Australian Jessica-Rose Clark lost her Invicta FC debut by unanimous decision to undefeated Swedish fighter Pannie Kianzad.

UFC 193 is obviously a big deal for us MMA fans in Australia and especially Melbourne, but **Conor McGregor** doesn't see the appeal.

McGregor, who will face Chad Mendes for the interim featherweight title this weekend, doesn't feel Melbourne is the right fit for his next fight.

"(Melbourne) does not appeal to me really because it has no significance to me," said McGregor.

"It's the Dublin stadium I want. This is the dream. This is what I created. There's probably nobody on the roster who could fill a stadium right now except me. For you to take that dream and try to put me in another country to fill a stadium, it doesn't really interest me."

There has been a lot of speculation on who will fight at UFC 193, one speculation being a unification of the featherweight division between Aldo and McGregor — should he get past Mendes first.

UFC managing director of operations for Canada, Australia and New Zealand Tom Wright has revealed that at least one, and more likely two, champions will defend their belt this November in Melbourne.

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World-renowned reality-based self-defence instructor Richard Dimitri looks at the good and bad of the RBSD movement and how it's shaped his world

#### **Fighting on Your Knees**

A top aikido instructor reveals why some traditional Japanese arts still train combat techniques from a kneeling position as well as standing

#### **The Controversial Ninja**

Part two of our chat with Japanese history professor and ninjutsu authority Dr Kacem Zoughari, a direct student of Grandmaster Masaaki Hatsumi

#### 'Stop & Seize' Karate

Masters of Goju karate look at how blocking and striking sets up the art's devastating seizing and crushing techniques

#### From Sparring to Street

Part two of krav maga and MMA coach Liam Resnekov's article on how to turn combat sport skills into an effective self-defence arsenal

#### **Drunken Kung Fu**

Aussie Shaolin Temple rep' Sifu Ramesh Patel takes us inside one of the Shaolin monks' most misunderstood fighting methods

#### **Filipino Warrior Ways**

Sifu Salem Assli offers an insight into the history and connections of the many martial arts systems of the Philippines' islands

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#### LIVING BUDO WITH DAVID DANGERFIELD



# Paranoid...or Prepared?

Awareness is universally considered the key to self-defence, but are we training for it?

nterestingly, when contributors to Blitz's Technique Workshop section — all experienced martial artists — are asked to identify the most important elements of self-defence, they almost invariably begin with 'awareness'. This makes me wonder if our preparation for self-defence is really as balanced as it could be. How many hours a week do we spend on fitness, strength and technical training, and how much goes into building awareness? And really...what is awareness?

In my view, awareness is a conscious and/or subconscious recognition of 'what is'. But it's very easy to confuse 'what is' with 'what we think is'. The difference between awareness and thinking is like the difference between the room you're sitting in and an artist's painting of the same room. The former is the reality, while the latter is simply a representation of that reality. Like the painting, thinking can be coloured, but in its case by perceptions, assumptions and biases...and while thinking is of course very important, it can also be very unreliable. The question we're left with, then, is how might we train to build our awareness?

A common way to start is with exercises that draw attention to the breath. For example, sitting quietly, we bring our attention to our breathing, focusing on the mechanics and quality of diaphragmatic breath control. Each time the mind wanders, we gently bring it back to our breath. While this is a great starting point, though, my preference is to develop the quality of my attention in the course of my daily life by practising 'noticing'.

My Shinto Muso-ryu teacher advised me to recapture the state of mind that seamlessly brings 'noticing' back to the forefront of our daily life. As he says, the reason we are alive today is because our ancestors were survivors — they survived for millennia in very hostile environments. Built deep into us is the mindset that was innate to them and that we require, but it has become increasingly dormant as a result of overexposure to the illusion of safety in the modern world. He suggested we tap back into the mental state of our ancestors; the human engaged in the hunt for its survival, balancing the

search for food and resources with the equally important task of not becoming food for another predator. We know this state — it sits deep within all of us and needs no learning, just 'remembering'. It is not a reversion to animal instincts, but quite the opposite: it's a reminder of how the human distinguished himself from other animals.

Try this simple game: as quickly as possible, determine whether people are left- or right-handed. How? There's the watch, of course, or, from the rear, the pocket containing the wallet. Or the direction the belt tab faces, or the direction of their tea cup handle. And when in doubt, you can pass them something. You can also simply watch people with a view to understanding what's on their mind. Are they happy, stressed, impatient, waiting for someone, busy or even teeming with latent aggression? (Naturally, try not to be conspicuous when observing people in case you draw the wrong kind of attention to yourself.)

You could also play 'spot the difference' as you walk or run around your area, or the local shops. Is that car always in that driveway? Do they mow the park every second Thursday? Was that shop window set up like that yesterday? This encourages us to study people and places, to be alert to our

environment and to be aware of its rhythms and patterns.

If you want to extend your awareness training, consider the following. The fire brigade recommend that we install smoke alarms but also practise fire drills regularly. How many people actually do that at home with their families? Try this: Crawl as fast as you can from your room to the nearest exit with your eyes closed, or maybe to your children's rooms, locate their beds and then crawl to the nearest exit. If you have a fire escape plan, do vou have a home security plan? Have you assessed your home to maximise the safety of its occupants? Does it include strategies to survive a home invasion? Do you practise them?

External awareness must be complemented by inner awareness. In self-defence courses we talk about the need to know your 'bottom line' — how far you are willing to go to survive. Don't confront this question when a real crisis arises; consider it now, make your plans and then regularly rehearse them mentally, if not physically.

To paraphrase Sun Tzu, if you know your enemy and you know yourself, you will never be defeated. Is the enemy the violent drunk outside the pub, or is it the lack of outer and inner awareness that put us there with him?

awareness...but do you? Was up I enc and Daw Ref arts swe Sur cha pec

Predators maintain

David Dangerfield, 6th Dan aikido, is the author of Martial Reflections – In Search of Wisdom. He began training in martial arts in 1974 and today teaches aikido and Shinto Muso Ryu swordsmanship at Kenshinryu, his full-time dojo on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. He is also the founder of the Compass Institute, a charity that provides post-secondary education and training to young people with disabilities using budo principles.



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#### **GET TACTICAL** WITH GRAHAM KUERSCHNER



# **How Things Have Changed**

The nature of violence has definitely changed in 50 years, but has our training kept up?

ow things have changed. When I started my training almost 50 years ago, selfdefence was, for males, at least, about being able to 'take care of yourself'. That meant having the skills to deal with a single unarmed opponent in what was really a duel, when you would literally 'step outside' to 'sort things out' as the means of resolving a confrontation. The protocol was that it was to be a fair fight and things such as king hits were considered the act of cowards. You may have won the fight that way, but you lost respect by doing so.

Not these days. That remnant of the 17th and 18th century pistol and sword duels between men to redeem their honour died out in the 1960s. It's almost laughable now that I remember discussing tactics with students in such circumstances and the issue of the day was whether you were the first to walk outside or second. If you were first, you could pick the place that suited you but you had to watch your back as you walked out. If you were second, you had to watch out for someone with no honour who might hold the door open and then slam it in your face or suddenly spin around and attack.

That sense of dueling carried over into fights between students of different martial arts. It was about 'honour'. The Chinese and Filipino systems I was training in were noted for this. The fights were either prearranged and at a remote location or involved turning up at the opposing school unannounced and having it out

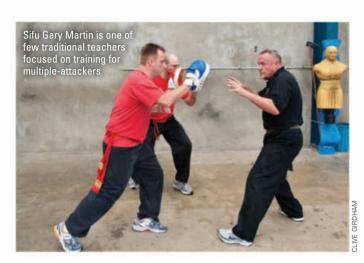
then and there. I'm not proud to say that I too got involved in that nonsense and things did get ugly. Thankfully that practice has died out.

The point here is that the mainstream systems of the day were reasonably aligned with the needs of the day. They taught fighting skills for one-on-one duels. Today, that's not the reality.

Although not generally recognised, our field has split out into three streams: the traditional martial arts, combat sports and self-defence or defensive tactics. There's a blurring of the boundaries between these streams and hence a confusion of purpose. But what I see that most contributes to this confusion is the notion that self-defence (for males) is still about training for a 'duel' - meaning, gaining the skills required to physically dominate within the confines of rules of engagement.

Times have changed but the notions on which many so-called self-defence systems are based have not. People's attitudes have changed, technology has changed, the law has changed and the nature of street violence has changed significantly. So have the roles and required behaviours of those who deal with violence professionally, such as soldiers, police, security and correctional services officers. Ditto those who face it in their work context such as reception staff. teachers, health care workers and social services staff.

I teach hundreds of these people and I hear what goes on. They approach me for assistance and I'm challenged



by the breadth and complexity of the issues they face in dealing with modern violence in all its forms. It was so much simpler 'back then'.

Let's take four examples to contrast the challenge.

Firstly we have an increasing number of people with gentle personalities who are concerned for their safety but are out of touch with the warrior within them. They are unable to summon enough fire from within to strike anyone to do damage, yet I'm supposed to teach them how to deal with violence.

Second is a small but noticeable number of people who have been the victim of violent crime, are psychologically damaged as a result and want to reclaim themselves. But for training purposes I'm to take them into the exact territory where they suffered their physical and, more notably, their psychological damage — and

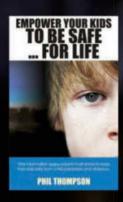
in so doing not make their psychological challenges worse or provoke a relapse.

Thirdly, we have people with serious time constraints. They are travelling to potentially dangerous places in the immediate future, or, worse, they have a violent partner who is tracking them down or is about to go on parole. I have to teach them something in a short amount of time.

Finally, there is teaching those whose job it is to deal with violent people, sometimes in life-threatening circumstances, but their ability to respond is severely constrained by department policy and the training they received at the academy — training that is geared to being 'camera friendly' and mindful of occupational health and safety concerns.

So what has changed to match this new and more complex need? To be continued...

Graham Kuerschner is a 49-year veteran of the martial arts and can be contacted through his website www.sdtactics.com.au



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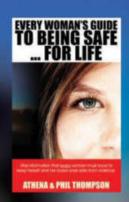
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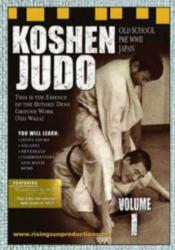
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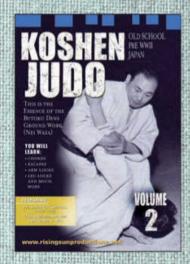
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### **Natural Selection**

In selecting draftees for the AIS Combat Centre, AIS scientists were looking for answers: was it physical or mental traits that separated those selected from those left behind?

ot long ago, we at the Australian Institute of Sport Combat Centre determined that it's desirable for AIS combat sports draftees to have a 'combat mindset'. This should not be confused with pure aggression though; 'combat mindset' refers to the psychological attributes of resilience/hardiness, determination and intrinsic motivation. The international sporting elite tend to display these attributes in some way, yet sports generally tend to instead identify athletes' potential based on sportspecific skill sets and athletic capability. Our military Special Forces (SF), on the other hand, focus on identifying the aforementioned psychological attributes by taking extremely fit soldiers beyond what their bodies have ever done before, and also beyond what their minds think is reasonable.

So, can SF selection methodology be adapted for use in combat sports?

Well, for the first AIS combat sports draft, we selected for two of the four Olympic combat sports: judo and boxing. Rather than just repeating a selection process designed for soldiers, we adjusted it to fit our new objective. We decided that the core psychological attributes of resilience, determination and intrinsic motivation would remain as the core for the combat sports athlete, but we wanted to add sport-specific psychological traits, and the best way to do that was to ask the Olympic coaches what they look for in a champion. We soon had a whiteboard covered in ideas, which we narrowed

down into traits that we agreed were important to both sports. These were: self-discipline, resistance to failure, 'killer instinct', determination, mental toughness, preparedness to experience pain and readiness to make weight for a fight. Most of these crossed over from soldier to athlete, although being prepared to make weight was unique to combat sports.

Next, we formulated the first talent identification camp by combining the best of AIS sports science with our modified SF selection techniques. Hundreds of applicants undertook physical testing in their home states. and from this we selected 40 of the most physically gifted athletes, and brought them to the AIS for the selection camp. Before the camp, many in judo and boxing were doubtful about our chance of success. To have a camp find someone who is fit and mentally tough is one thing, but for them to learn the 'art' of boxing and judo is quite another. 'What happens when they take their first punch to the face?' or 'What happens when they are thrown through the air time and time again?' To be honest, as a combat sportsman myself, I was even unsure if that was going to be the kicker that would let the process down. We weren't going to put candidates in physical danger of injury; we were not looking for thugs, but for intelligent and physically gifted athletes who can learn anything quickly.

And the results were better than even the most optimistic of us could have predicted. The selection rates were as



I expected, with fewer than 10 being accepted into the draft, but all 40 were excellent, with those selected being exceptional.

The draftees' longerterm results have also been outstanding. All have won state titles in their sport within a year. The judo draftees all won national medals in their division and after 18 months we have one draftee ranked fifth in Australia after medalling at national and international tournaments. Some feedback from the coaches who have AIS draftees in their gyms has included: "He is an absolute workhorse — amazing attitude"; and "I love having the Sports Draft athlete in my gym... His work ethic is rubbing off on my other young boxers."

The great value in this multidimensional selection process is that it is transformational, and in ways we greatly underestimated. As one of the selected athletes reported, "Getting through the draft has helped me understand that physical limitations can be overcome if you allow your mind to take over and push through. It has been one of the toughest challenges to be a part of but now, getting through it, I have the confidence to take on nearly any physical task within reason."

This mental transformation is the most important part of the process, as it will stay with the athletes long after their time in sport and will have a positive effect on them for the rest of their lives.

Sgt (retired) Paul Cale has fought in Afghanistan and until mid-2013 managed the Integrated Combat Centre at 2nd Commando Regiment, where he was in charge of developing CQC for Australian Special Forces. He now leads the combat sports program at the Australian Institute of Sport and runs Cale Integrated Combat (www.facebook.com/caleintegratedcombat)

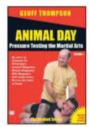
# Knowledge You Need!

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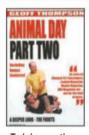
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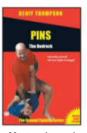
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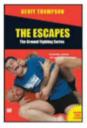
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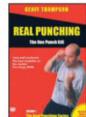
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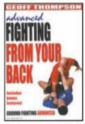
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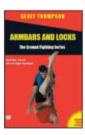
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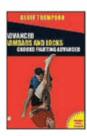
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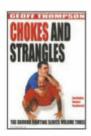
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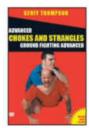
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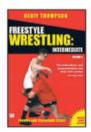
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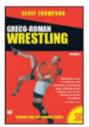
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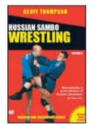
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#### THE LAST WORD WITH JOHN B WILL



# **Become a Learning Machine**

Instead of trying to become a fighting machine, moulding your mind into a learning machine will serve you better in the long run.

began my serious martial arts journey once I left Australian shores and began to search abroad, primarily, at first, in Asia. In those early days, I didn't understand the Indonesian, Thai, Japanese or Indian languages, and so I had to train myself to 'look' and 'think'. For all intents and purposes, I may as well have been deaf. My very first learning epiphany came when I worked out how to spot the best practitioner in the class and do a comparative analysis that would reveal what he was doing that the others were not doing. This was the first real skill I developed and it still serves me very well today.

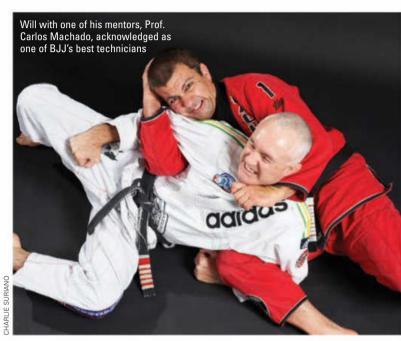
I realised early on that exceptional outcomes in performance were usually the result of someone doing exceptional things. I became determined to develop my skill at spotting what these exceptional things were; and then, of course, trying to replicate them myself. I quickly learned that if I did the same sorts of things that everyone else was doing, I could only expect the same sorts of results that they were getting. If I wanted exceptional results, I had to do those things that the exceptional people did. That sounds easy to do, but in fact it was not. Looking, very, very carefully at the small (let's say almost invisible) things that the exceptional martial artists were doing, opened my eyes to this little-understood secret — the secret of detailed-modelling.

It is not enough to just 'model' the successful behaviours of other people; the real trick is to understand those behaviours and take ownership of them.

The next learning epiphany I had was the realisation that efficient use of time really made a difference in the long run. If the class was allocated five minutes to drill a technique and, say, the majority of the people in that class completed 20 repetitions in that time, I would try to complete 30. That's 33 per cent more experience gained in the same timeframe! Over a year, it really adds up. Eventually it's almost equivalent to having done three vears training for every two vears training that everyone else does: three decades compared to two decades, and so on.

I would also try to get a couple of extra reps in before I left training to head home that day, and then a couple more before training started the next day. This resulted in me usually doing double the amount of reps that the average person in the class was doing — and I didn't need any extra days to do it in, I didn't need to do any extra travel or any more washing of training gear, I just made much better use of my training time. Efficiency!

The next learning epiphany I had was realising that the 'elite' weren't necessarily smarter than I was. I had intelligence and I could bring that to bear on the same sets of problems they were dealing with. In other words, I could 'think' for myself and not just blindly follow, no matter how talented my role model was. Cultivating the habit of analytical thinking and problem solving is a habit into which it's really



worth investing some time. The wonderful bonus is that analytical-thinking and problemsolving capabilities can be brought to bear on a plethora of other challenges that life throws at us. Being able to systematically break a problem down into its component parts and then develop a solution to that problem is a skill that can drive our lives from success to success even under adverse conditions. We should all become better problem solvers; and problem solving begins with an analysis of the problem. Slicing a problem down into manageable portions is a great way to clarify a way forward when things seem difficult.

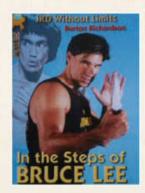
We cannot change or improve someone's ability to

teach us anything, but what we can do is learn to become better students. We can practise taking notes; practise breaking things down into smaller (more manageable) chunks; be first there for class; be the last to leave; come with questions at the ready; be respectful and helpful to those who are trying to teach us; be front and centre at all times; be engaged!

Life requires that we learn.
So why not be the very best learners we can be? I am privileged to have earned my Black-belt in a number of styles — but at the risk of sounding corny, my first priority is to be a Black-belt in learning. Then, everything else will follow easily.

John B Will is head of BJJ Australia and teaches Brazilian jiu-jitsu, shootfighting and self-defence solutions around the world. Check out his regular blog at www.bij-australia.blogspot.com.au

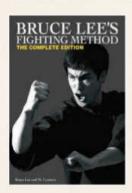
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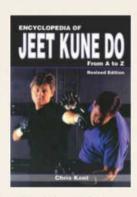
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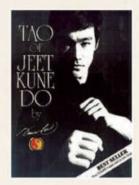
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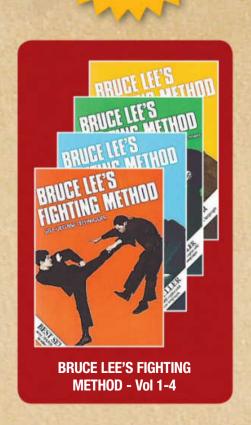
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